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ABSTRACT

The conference reported in this document, jointly sponsored by the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration and the Centre for Research in Literacy, arose out of public concern about literacy standards and claims that higher literacy levels will be needed in an increasingly technological society--concerns that make it necessary for educators to consider whether present teacher education courses are appropriate to meet teachers' needs in the 1990s. A major aim of this conference was to develop recommendations indicating what the content of teacher education courses should include if teachers are to be prepared to meet the language demands of the future. The report opens with an overview of the conference followed by speakers' presentations organized into three segments, each of which is composed of a keynote address and a panel presentation. The themes of the three presentations are: (1) Language Knowledge and Language Usage: The Present Position; (2) English Language Needs in the Future: What Ought Teachers To Know? and (3) What Are the Implications for Teacher Education Courses? Appendices provide: a summary of conclusions and recommendations, speakers' presentations in full, a bibliography, a committee membership list, and a list of participants. (LL)

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RESPONDING TO LITERACY NEEDS

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS AND TRAINING CONSULTANTS

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RESPONDING TO LITERACY NEEDS: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS AND TRAINING CONSULTANTS

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Queensland Board of Teacher Registration
Toowong

1991

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PREFACE

As a contribution to International Literacy Year, the Board of Teacher Registration, in conjunction with the Centre for Research and Learning in Literacy at Griffith University, hosted a three-day working conference in April 1990 titled *Responding to Literacy Needs: Implications for Teacher Educators and Training Consultants*.

This report presents brief overviews of the conference proceedings and of speakers' presentations, followed by a summary of outcomes and recommendations.

The contribution of the following to the conference is gratefully acknowledged:

- the speakers, Dr Larry Mikulecky, Dr Allan Luke, Mr Garth Boomer, Ms Rosie Wickert, Dr Peggy Nightingale, Mr Bert Morris, Dr Rodney Huddleston, Mr John Carr, Dr Bill Corcoran and Dr Trevor Cairney;

- the Minister for Education, the Honourable Paul Braddy, MLA, for presenting the opening address of the public lecture evening;

- Mr Bert Morris for his invaluable role in organisation of the conference;

- the chairpersons of the various sessions;

- conference participants;

- the members of the conference planning committee;

- the staff at Griffith University Roundhouse and Halls of Residence.

This report was edited by Jill Manitzky and Debra Cunningham and typed by Jackie Sorensen of the Office of the Board of Teacher Registration.

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OVERVIEW OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The Board of Teacher Registration, in conjunction with the Centre for Research and Learning in Literacy at Griffith University, hosted a three-day working conference from 17-19 April 1990 titled *Responding to Literacy Needs: Implications for Teacher Educators and Training Consultants*.

As 1990 was designated International Literacy Year, the Board of Teacher Registration considered it appropriate that in 1990 the literacy and language education component of teacher education courses should be reviewed. Public concern about literacy standards and claims that higher literacy levels will be needed in our increasingly technological society made it necessary that educators consider whether present teacher education courses are appropriate to meet teachers' needs in the 1990s.

A major aim of the conference was the development of recommendations indicating what the content of teacher education courses should include if teachers are to be prepared to meet the language demands of the future.

The conference was attended by approximately one hundred representatives from Queensland higher education institutions, teacher employing authorities, curriculum authorities, subject associations, teacher organisations and parent and community groups.

The conference was opened by Mr John Dwyer, Chief Inspector of Schools, Department of Education, Queensland. In his address, Mr Dwyer welcomed participants to the conference and expressed the belief that the outcomes would be exciting. He looked forward to a productive conference leading to consensus on well-formulated recommendations for consideration by the Board of Teacher Registration.

On the first day of the conference, the focus of the initial session, chaired by Mr Dwyer, was *Language Knowledge and Language Usage: The Present Position*. The keynote speaker, Dr Larry Mikulecky of the Indiana University, USA, addressed the issue of literacy demands of the workplace. There followed a presentation from a panel of speakers, Ms Rosie Wickert, Dr Peggy Nightingale and Mr Bert Morris. The session concluded with small group discussion of the issues raised.

The second plenary session, chaired by Mr John Carr, was titled *English Language Needs in the Future: What Ought Teachers to Know?*. Mr Garth Boomer of the South Australian Department of Education presented a keynote address, *The Preservice Education of Teachers with Regard to Language in Education: Looking to the Year 2000*. The speakers in the following panel presentation, Dr Rodney Huddleston and Mr John Carr, discussed the teaching of English grammar and the *P-10 Language Education Framework*. Further opportunity was provided for participants to engage in small group discussion prior to the conference dinner and public evening lecture.

A wide cross-section of interested members of the community attended the public lecture in addition to the conference participants. The evening commenced with a welcome and introduction by Professor Phil Meade of Griffith University and included an opening address by the Queensland Minister for Education, the Honourable Paul Braddy, MLA. Dr Larry Mikulecky presented the public lecture on workplace literacy demands and the implications for education.

The plenary session of the second day of the conference addressed the topic 'What are the implications for teacher education courses?' The keynote speaker, Dr Allan Luke, presented an address which suggested that teachers need a sound understanding of a variety of approaches to language and literacy teaching. The following panel of speakers comprised Dr Bill Corcoran and Dr Trevor Cairney. Dr Corcoran emphasised the need to equip teachers with the means to analyse the social and ideological implications of genre and discourse, while Dr Cairney presented views on new directions teacher education should take to respond to current demands and future challenges.

Conference participants then divided into working groups according to their particular area of interest: early childhood (Years P-3); Years 4-10; and post-Year 10, including TAFE. Groups were requested to provide a brief report, clearly indicating any recommendations made. The questions for which responses were sought were:

- What do all (early childhood/primary/secondary/TAFE) teachers need to know about language?
- What do teachers need to know about the different purposes which language can play in society?
- What do teachers need to know about ways in which language abilities can be developed?

- What personal literacy standards can be expected of teacher education graduates?

In addition, participants were asked to indicate, in relation to each of the above questions:

- What implications does this have for the content of preservice and inservice courses?
- How can the Board of Teacher Registration, employing authorities and other providers of inservice teacher education encourage these implications to be implemented?

Working groups were able to reconvene to discuss these questions and formulate responses on Wednesday evening and again on Thursday morning, the final day of the conference. In the concluding plenary session on Thursday afternoon, chaired by Mr Neville Fry, Director of the Board of Teacher Registration, each group presented its report and recommendations.

OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATIONS BY SPEAKERS

PLENARY 1

LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGE USAGE: THE PRESENT POSITION

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:
DR LARRY MIKULECKY, INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Dr Mikulecky is a leading world authority on the relationship between school language programs and adult literacy demands. He has conducted seminal research studies into the literacy skills required in schools and various sections of the workplace. His analyses of workplace literacy demands have led to the introduction in many large companies in the United States of workplace literacy programs which have immediate and significant implications for TAFE teaching and TAFE teacher training.

WORKPLACE LITERACY DEMANDS

Dr Mikulecky addressed the issue of the increasing literacy demands in the workplace today, and the implications for education.

There must be a match between the learning which takes place in schools and the changing demands of the workplace associated with technological advances and increasing democratisation, in order to avoid the problem of people being unable to participate in society and earn a living. A school leaver with third world skills in a developed nation is condemned to a third world standard of living.

The changing natures of society and the workplace have increased literacy demands. Data illustrating literacy changes in the United States in a single lifetime were discussed. In 1910, 7.7 per cent of the population could not read and only 8 per cent of adolescents graduated from high school. During World War I, 25 per cent of army enlistees were illiterate, however 55 per cent were functionally illiterate in terms of being able to put their literacy to effective military use. During World War II, the army raised the level for acceptance to a fourth grade reading ability, and by the 1980s, required recruits to have a high school diploma.

Although today a lower percentage of the population is illiterate, the workplace presents greater literacy demands. Ninety per cent of jobs require reading and writing, and 70 per cent of workplace reading is between 9th and 12th grade reading difficulty. A large proportion of the population lacks the necessary problem-solving and higher order skills required for occupational literacy today.

The nature of work has changed in recent years. There are new categories of jobs, fewer unskilled occupations, and many occupations today require higher levels of literacy from their workers. Job areas in decline include farm labour, logging work, housekeeping and home child care. These were all occupations requiring low levels of literacy, whereas the job areas predicted to grow, such as health, geriatric, and service fields, place greater demands on literacy.

Data indicate that workers in many fields experience difficulties in undertaking some of the basic tasks associated with their work. For example, bank tellers had problems summarising procedures for customers, comprehending memos and letters, and understanding training manuals.

Difficulties experienced by workers may have far-reaching implications. Workers today have to be aware of health and safety regulations, be able to follow detailed written instructions, understand complex manuals and write cohesive reports. In areas such as the timber industry, employees who are able to read at a fourth or fifth grade level and who do not consider they have a literacy problem, are increasingly being required to understand stricter regulations and follow more involved directions. The food processing, mining, manufacturing and automotive industries must maintain certain quality levels, which creates further demands on workers' literacy. Increasingly, workers close to the production line have to be able to make decisions; it is no longer economically viable to employ those who cannot. Democratisation of the workplace has led to greater emphasis on discussion, note taking and report writing skills. Almost every task found in the workplace is multilevel and requires integration of different skills.

These developments have significant implications for education. Workplace literacy demands are far greater than the reading and writing which is required of students in schools. Research data suggest that considerably less reading occurs in schools than in many occupations. The average daily reading time of school students is 98 minutes, compared with many occupations which require two to three hours reading daily. Furthermore, school literacy differs from that required in the workplace.

Educators must realise jobs are changing and take action to ensure people are functionally literate. The importance of regular participation in literacy activities was illustrated by discussion of a U.S. survey undertaken to determine the reading loss which occurs over the extended summer vacation. The top 25 per cent of students experienced rapid reading growth during the school year and slower gains over summer. Average students hold or fall slightly in reading skills over the vacation, but the lowest 25 per cent of students lose over summer a significant proportion of the small gains they made during the school year.

There are different types of literacy, and one type of literacy transfers in only a limited way to others. As school reading is largely textbook based, limited transfer to the literacy demands of the workplace causes problems. To improve students' abilities to transfer literacy skills from the school to the workplace, a greater use should be made of a wide range of real reading materials in schools, for example, newspapers, pamphlets, forms, advertisements, manuals, correspondence, tables and graphs. More activities involving problem-solving and real-world literacy should be included. Students must be given tasks which require them to be active participants in their learning and to take responsibility for their lives. Students should be involved in gathering the necessary materials and be encouraged to use telephone directories to locate resources, and to write, edit and rewrite their own letters requesting information. Students can be given responsibility for planning and record-keeping tasks. School should more closely resemble the real world.

A significant portion of the U.S. and presumably the Australian population is not equipped to deal with an information economy. If we want to maintain our developed nation standard of living, language and literacy education must be approached differently to ensure students are able to take their places as productive members of the workforce. The more people there are who are not able to perform a useful role in society, the more productive others must be. The developed nation with the best educated lower half of the population is most likely to remain developed. Literacy issues must be addressed if we are to retain our status as a developed nation.

PANEL OF SPEAKERS

MS ROSIE WICKERT, UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY

Ms Wickert recently completed the first comprehensive Australian study into the language performance of adults in the general community. The results of this study were presented in the report *No Single Measure: A Survey of Australian Adult Literacy.*

NO SINGLE MEASURE: DIFFERENT LITERACIES FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES? SHOULDN'T WE BE LETTING TEACHERS KNOW?

Ms Wickert's presentation focused on a discussion of the results of the survey of adult literacy, as presented in the report *No Single Measure*, and on the implications of this study.

Literacy is multi-dimensional. People use a number of different literacies. The survey was concerned with three types of literacy - prose, document and quantitative. An item from each of the three categories was presented and the levels of achievement detailed. Results in many cases were poor. One of the more difficult tasks, which involved use of critical reading abilities to identify the issues behind a newspaper article, resulted in only 27 per cent of the sample responding correctly. It was noted the perceptions and experiences of many individuals reinforced these findings.

The study also established characteristics associated with literacy levels. The single most important factor was the amount of reading which adults do at present. This factor, coupled with another influence, the reading materials available in the childhood home, provided two clear conclusions. Firstly, that parents and other community members have a vital role to play in literacy skill development, and secondly, that maintenance of literacy skill is important.

Results of the research have significant implications, most importantly the need to address the problems of adult literacy more comprehensively than has previously been the case. Increased public awareness may lead to less complacency. There is an immediate need for greater funding, further research and increased accountability, and for skilled professional adult literacy workers.

DR PEGGY NIGHTINGALE, UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Dr Nightingale is one of the foremost authorities in Australia in the area of literacy standards in tertiary students. Her work at the University of New South Wales has demonstrated that better understanding of tertiary students' problems with academic writing can lead to appropriate programs for students and staff.

LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE OF TERTIARY STUDENTS

Dr Nightingale discussed the results of several studies which have investigated the language abilities of tertiary students, and presented the difficulties involved with assessing the extent and nature of problems in student writing.

Results of a number of studies undertaken at Australian universities in recent years indicate that tertiary students are seldom greatly lacking in basic skills. For example, only 16 per cent of first-year students at the University of Adelaide failed to reach the high standard nominated as acceptable on the English Skills Assessment Test.

A detailed analysis of papers produced in British History at an Australian university in 1974 and again in 1984 showed no significant difference between the year groups, but a slight trend favouring the 1984 students.

A number of observations was made about student writing: there is a lack of consistency in errors made; a large number of errors is in areas subject to personal taste; and error-free writing may still be poor writing. The point was made that it is extremely difficult to say what exactly is needed to help with tertiary students' writing and that objective testing of whether students can identify and correct errors will not tell us if any individual can write well. Errors which distinguished between skilled writers and others were not the errors usually emphasised in calls for 'back to basics', nor those emphasised in traditional drills. Many errors typical of poor writing were those associated with the constitution of meaning. More emphasis must be placed on the processes involved in producing written work.

There is need to give serious thought to language development in teacher education programs. However, we must aim higher than 'remedial' activities and ensure the problem is approached at the right level. All disciplines within an institution must be involved in promoting improved literacy levels.

MR BERT MORRIS, GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

Mr Morris has conducted two national studies (1976, 1986) into the preservice preparation of Australian teachers in the teaching of reading. These studies show that not only is there considerable variation among institutions in the amount of time given to teacher preparation in the teaching of reading but that this variation also extends to the content of the courses which are provided.

Mr Morris presented research data on the literacy levels and language use in classrooms of different, competent subject teachers of Year 9 classes. Language use observed included reading aloud, reading reflectively, following teacher reading, writing answers to questions and writing reflectively.

An investigation of these literacy events in the classrooms revealed there was a lower level of literacy involved in classrooms of subjects other than English subject classes; for example, less reflective reading and writing was undertaken. The language content of teacher education programs for teachers of subjects other than English is correspondingly low, with very little information included about how language can be used or how to develop language. However, dramatic improvements can be achieved. Science and maths teachers who undertook inservice studies in language development were able to involve a much greater range of language in the classroom.

It is essential that teacher education courses prepare all teachers with the expertise to develop literacy skills in their classrooms.

PLENARY 2

ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEEDS IN THE FUTURE: WHAT OUGHT TEACHERS TO KNOW?

MR GARTH BOOMER,
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mr Boomer has been a leader in the field of language education for over 20 years and his writings are internationally recognised. Mr Boomer is a past-President of the Australian Association of Teachers of English, a former Director of the Curriculum Development Centre and a past Chairman of the Commonwealth Schools Commission.

THE PRESERVICE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS WITH REGARD TO LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION: LOOKING TO THE YEAR 2000

Mr Boomer discussed the requirements of teacher education courses which will prepare teachers with the ability to develop in students the language, thinking and communication capacity essential for the present context and future demands of the workplace.

As language is central to learning, it is necessary to construct a far more pervasive culture of language learning in the preparation of teachers to ensure that students continually confront questions of learning language, learning about language and learning through language in their teacher preparation. All teachers must understand the way in which language and thinking interrelate, and have a knowledge of how language operates in various texts. Formal, deliberate, systematic and sustained reflection on their own experiences of education as learners and teachers should be the cornerstone of all students' preparation to be teachers. Primary teachers and teachers of English or communication studies in the secondary school need to develop special insights into language. They require a sound grounding in language use; the ability to talk confidently about key genres; an understanding of how language functions in different contexts, with different purposes and different audiences; and the ability to produce required texts and analyse the processes involved.

As teaching has a strong tendency to reproduce itself, teacher preparation institutions must demonstrate what they hope to see happening in schools. They should be models of the best teaching based on a state of the art research and experimentation into the art and science of teaching.

PANEL OF SPEAKERS

DR RODNEY HUDDLESTON, UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Dr Huddleston is internationally known for his work on grammatical theory and the grammar of English. He recently conducted a study with the Queensland Department of Education into the authenticity and accuracy of the English grammar taught in textbooks commonly used in Queensland schools. Dr Huddleston's work has shown that not only are inappropriate grammar rules being taught but that these rules are also inaccurately applied in the textbooks which purport to teach them.

Dr Huddleston's presentation titled *What ought teachers to know about English grammar?* aimed to draw attention to a number of differences between modern linguistics and traditional grammar in their treatment of English grammar.

Definitions and explanations of grammatical categories in traditional and modern grammar were explored and demonstrated by numerous examples. Attention was drawn to the distinction between language-particular and general levels of definition. An interesting resumē of a number of issues related to prescriptive grammar followed. The need to allow for different varieties within standard English was emphasised. A number of apt examples were used to illustrate the distinction between rules of grammar and rules of style.

Dr Huddleston argued that, by following certain very basic principles of modern linguistics in general, we can make major improvements to the presentation of English grammar without departing radically from traditional grammar.

MR JOHN CARR, QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mr Carr is a Senior Education Officer in the Department of Curriculum Services of the Department of Education.

Mr Carr presented an address on language education from the curriculum developer's perspective.

The components of the *P-10 Language Education Framework* were described. A number of models had been used in the Framework:

- the language model relates language texts to their socio-cultural context;
- the language-learning model suggests children learn language by using it and reflecting upon it;
- the curriculum model has two levels, a holistic level in terms of language in use, and an analytic level in terms of attitudes, processes, skills and knowledge;
- a worthwhile activity model involves real life activities, life-like activities and focused learning episodes;
- an activity-sequencing model in which units of work have orientation enhancing and synthesising phases.

The implications of the language curriculum should be considered when determining the language education requirements of teacher education courses. Essential knowledge for teachers would include an understanding of language functions and structure; an awareness of children's language background and language development; an understanding of reading and writing processes; and knowledge about drama, literature and mass media. Language education in preservice teacher education courses should draw on descriptive linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, communications, literature and drama. Teachers should be aware it is possible to use more than one approach to language and literacy learning.

PLENARY 3

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES?

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:
DR ALLAN LUKE, JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

Dr Luke, Senior Lecturer in Language Education and Deputy Dean of Education, was previously at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. He is recognised as one of the leading contemporary writers in language education. He is the author of several significant books about literacy, the role of literacy in modern society and on the role of textbooks in literacy teaching.

NO SINGLE METHOD: CRITICAL APPROACHES TO THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS OF LITERACY

Dr Luke provided historical perspectives on the issue of approaches to language and literacy education. Throughout history there have been different literacies for different social milieux. Education has always been tied to economic, political and social factors. The point was made that there is no single unitary entity called literacy, but there are different literacies. Therefore different approaches are necessary; there is no single right approach.

It was emphasised that school literacy training produces children who are often adequate at 'school' reading and writing; however the degree of transfer to real world situations has not been established. Further, the dearth of research and teacher understanding of literacy in community contexts was noted.

In considering language and literacy education, three points must be considered. Firstly, literacy is a malleable social technology; it can be reshaped according to needs. Secondly, literacy cannot be looked at in isolation of larger cultural, political and economic contexts. Finally, there may be no single most suitable or natural approach; all approaches are artefacts of culture.

Teacher education programs must ensure courses do not prepare teachers who narrowly subscribe to one approach. Concern must be not with which method but with which kinds of understandings about theory and practice teachers require.

There is a need for greater emphasis on language education in teacher preparation. The issue of teachers becoming 'de-skilled' through use of prepared materials was discussed. The danger is that unless teachers have a broad grasp of theoretical issues, they cannot make critical daily instructional decisions when prepared formulas do not work.

Teacher preparation thus should provide opportunities for teachers to undertake a foundation course in order to grasp theoretical issues, as learning method alone is not sufficient. This course should develop students' knowledge of linguistics - including morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and genre - and it should 'tune their eyes and ears' to language and textuality in the social world. Components should include the socio-cultural aspects of language acquisition and use as well as understanding of the current literacy 'crisis', language and gender, and other topics. Furthermore, student teachers should have the opportunity to engage in tasks which require them to undertake text analysis and writing, to learn about language and how to use language.

PANEL OF SPEAKERS

DR BILL CORCORAN, QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Dr Corcoran spent many years as a Senior Lecturer at James Cook University where he was closely involved in the restructuring of the language/literacy aspects of the teacher education program. He is a well-known author and is the editor of *English in Australia*.

LANGUAGE PRACTICES AND RESISTANT READING AND WRITING

Dr Corcoran discussed three different views of language commencing with the instrumental view which is concerned with competency, and tends to reproduce cultural inequalities; the interactive or expressionist view which is concerned with the meaning making power of the individual; and finally the dialogical or sociological view in which language is seen as a social practice. A model of language, an attempt to interrelate text, genre and discourse, was described. Examples of students' responses to passages of literature were discussed.

The understandings seen as necessary for student teachers were firstly that any text is a social construct and secondly that all texts contain gaps and contradictions which, when isolated, reveal that certain interests are sustained, legitimised or marginalised. Furthermore, teachers should provide all students with opportunities to interrogate and challenge the ideology in a range of texts and finally, teachers must realise there are means of providing all students with the ability to contest and resist dominant discourses.

The most immediate concern was considered to be the necessity to equip teachers in training with the means to resist dominant discourse, in particular to critique the kind of social and ideological forces present in their own classroom discourses.

DR TREVOR CAIRNEY, UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY

Dr Cairney was formerly Director of the Reading Centre at Riverina College of Advanced Education in Wagga Wagga. He has written widely on the teaching of reading and writing, being generally associated with whole language approaches to literacy teaching. In his present position, Dr Cairney has a particular interest in the development of teacher education programs in the area.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES? WHERE HAVE WE BEEN AND WHERE ARE WE GOING TO?

Dr Cairney commenced his presentation by stating that he did not agree with assumptions held by many parties that the quality of teacher education or language education is poor, or that literacy standards have declined. However, there is a major need for changes in higher education, particularly in language teaching. These changes should involve higher education institutions working more collaboratively with schools; courses should involve more student activity in natural settings with real language users; presentation of courses should reflect the philosophy and practices of the subject content; and we need teachers who can think and reflect upon their teaching.

After a brief overview of the previous approaches and the present situation in teacher education, Dr Cairney presented his views of the new directions teacher education should take to cope with current demands and future challenges.

The content, presentation and assessment of teacher education courses should be revised to provide a different type of course, one that challenges, poses problems and requires students to reflect upon their practice. Teacher education courses need to produce teachers who know that language has psychological, cultural and social dimensions, and who understand how language is acquired and how it develops.

Content of courses should include a renewed emphasis on process and the role of language in learning. Methods of presentation should be dominated by inquiry-based learning and must involve students observing children and participating in a wide range of language activities. Student teachers should also engage in frequent reading and writing themselves. Assessment should be activity-centred, assumption challenging, and functional, and should involve process reflection. Teacher education courses must help students to develop personal pedagogies that will enable them to make informed decisions in the classroom.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the concluding session of the conference, reports and recommendations from the conference working groups were presented. An editorial subcommittee comprising representatives of each working group and members of the conference planning committee met subsequently to develop the summary of conclusions and recommendations which follows.

All groups stressed that as language is central to all learning, a knowledge of language and language education was essential for all teachers. Studies in language and literacy and language education must therefore be central to all preservice teacher education programs. Comprehensive, systematic and ongoing inservice teacher education programs of studies in these areas must also be offered and teachers currently in service encouraged to participate in these programs.

1. What Teachers Need to Know

Working groups had been invited to respond to a series of discussion questions about what teachers at various levels needed to know about language, the purposes language can play in society and ways in which language abilities can be developed.

The groups agreed that all teachers should have a knowledge of language, literacy and language education that embraced the following:

(a) *Language*

Teachers need a well-grounded understanding of:

- how children acquire language and literacy;
- the individual and social nature of children's language development;
- children's learning styles;
- the interrelationship of language and culture;
- the relationship of language and thought;

- the role of language in learning;

- function, structure, variation and use of language across a wide range of contexts and cultures;

- the interrelationship of language and other sign systems;

- the language of the discourse of organised knowledge in relevant subject discipline areas.

(b) *Role of Language in Society*

- Teachers need an awareness of appropriate language for different social purposes and contexts within and beyond their own cultures.

- Teachers need to understand the relationship between language and literacy, power and ideology.

- Teachers need a knowledge of language functions and structures.

- Teachers need a recognition of and respect for functions of language within other cultures.

- Teachers need to engage with a range of genres and discourses from popular culture and the community.

- Teachers need to give priority to the development of children's facility with a wide range of language functions.

- Teachers need to develop a language to talk about language and strategies to reflect on their own and others' language use.

(c) *Strategies for Promoting Language Learning*

- Teachers need to be able to analyse critically approaches to and resources for literacy teaching as a basis for curriculum decision-making.

- Teachers need to acknowledge and understand the significant role of the home context for the development of early language and literacy.

- Teachers need to understand that children learn language as they interact with and relate to others within the contexts of

    - the home
    - the classroom
    - the school and the wider community.

- Teachers need to recognise and acknowledge children's initiatives and capitalise on these in spontaneous and planned learning experiences.

- Teachers need to develop expertise in an extensive range of strategies to promote continuing language and literacy development.

- Teachers need to have opportunities to engage in and recognise the value of reflection on teaching practices.

- Teachers need to develop effective strategies for observing and monitoring children's language growth as a basis for program planning.

- Teachers need to recognise the interrelationship between language and content in all curriculum areas.

- Teachers need to foster children's metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness.

- Teachers need to be able to use interactive, problem-solving process approaches.

(d) *Language Competence*

- Teachers should be aware of their own use of language and be competent in the use of a wide range of genres.

- Teachers need to be able to use spoken and written texts sufficient to engage in continued professional discussion, dialogue and debate, and to adopt an advocacy position on behalf of the profession and the children they teach.

- Teachers should be able to model a range of effective functions and uses of language, spoken and written.
- Teachers need to develop an awareness of their own personal literacy history and the cultural contexts in which they are embedded.
- Teachers need to be effective language users.

2. Implications for Preservice Teacher Education

Working groups had been invited to consider the implications of their responses to the questions above for preservice teacher education.

(a) *All Preservice Programs*

Groups agreed that there was a need for core studies in language, literacy and language education for *all* teacher education students.

In addition, both foundations and curriculum studies subjects need to have a strong socio-cultural orientation which examines language in use in a range of communities and cultures.

Teacher education students should be aware of and engaged in debate about the relationship between language and power in social and economic terms.

All subjects in the program should take account of the role of language and literacy and of the socio-cultural implications of the use of language in the discipline concerned.

In order to enable students to engage in program planning which takes account of learners' initiative, interests and needs and to promote critical reflection and the development of a rationale for their practice, preservice teacher education programs must include a critical examination of:

- a range of approaches to language and literacy teaching and the theory underlying these approaches;

- a range of associated language and literacy resources;

- a range of strategies for organising the learning environment, promoting interaction, teaching and learning, observing and monitoring learners' language and literacy development and fostering their metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness.

Programs must also provide indepth consideration of language acquisition and development, acknowledging the significant role of the home context and the contribution of the range of child care, school and community settings. They must also address the recognition and remediation of learners with specific language learning difficulties.

Programs must provide regular and sustained opportunities for observation of and interaction with children and for the development of an extensive range of teaching strategies appropriate for working with learners.

Through both content and processes, preservice programs should provide ample opportunities for students to develop awareness of their own language and their ability to use spoken and written language effectively in a range of genres including professional dialogue, discussion and debate.

Of particular concern to the working groups considering the needs of secondary and TAFE teachers was the necessity for studies in the subject disciplines to address the use of language in the discipline, to model effective language use in the context of the discipline and to provide extensive, varied experience in the use of language. Curriculum studies in the discipline areas similarly needed to address teaching and learning through the language of the relevant discipline.

Recommendation 1

That the Board of Teacher Registration's Guidelines for the Acceptance of Preservice Teacher Education Courses for Registration Purposes include the following requirements:

(i) that all preservice teacher education programs include core studies in language, literacy and language education for all teacher education students;

(ii) that both education foundations and curriculum studies for all teacher education students have a strong socio-cultural orientation which examines language in use and the relationship between language and power in a range of communities and cultures;

(iii) that all subjects in preservice teacher education programs take account of the role of language and literacy and of the socio-cultural implications of the use of language in the discipline concerned.

(b) *Preservice Programs for Teachers of English in Secondary Schools*

The working group which considered the needs of specialist teachers of English at the secondary level considered that, in addition to the requirements outlined above, programs for English teachers should include studies which develop a sound understanding of language and literacy, literature, drama and mass media and the popular culture.

(c) *Language and Literacy Competencies of Teacher Education Students*

Some workshop participants favoured the introduction of an entry requirement equivalent to 'High Achievement' in Senior English for all teacher education courses. Others expressed concern that such a requirement did not necessarily relate to the student's own language and literacy competencies and could discriminate against particular ethnic or socio-economic groups.

It was generally agreed that graduating teachers should be expected to have achieved an adequate level of personal language competence. Some participants felt that teacher education programs should therefore provide diagnostic and remedial teaching to ensure that this occurred. At the same time, some participants argued that it was more appropriate for remediation to be addressed through pre-entry bridging courses for applicants who lacked adequate language skills.

Recommendation 2

That all preservice teacher education programs incorporate procedures to ensure that graduating teachers will have achieved a level of personal language competence appropriate to the demands of the profession.

(d) *Course Length*

Conference participants were of the view that all preservice teacher education programs should involve at least four years of tertiary study and not less than the equivalent of three semesters of professional studies. This was based on a consideration of the language, literacy and language education needs for all teachers, and also on an awareness of corresponding demands likely to arise in other subject areas as a result of current reviews such as the *Discipline Review of Teacher Education in Mathematics and Science* (the Speedy Report) and *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy* (the Garnaut Report).

Recommendation 3

That, in order to accommodate the needs of prospective teachers in language, literacy and language education as well as in other areas, all preservice teacher education programs involve at least four years of tertiary study and not less than the equivalent of three semesters of professional studies.

3. Implications for Inservice Teacher Education

Participants noted that there are currently some 34,000 teachers employed in government and non-government schools in Queensland. The great majority of these will still be teaching in the twenty-first century.

It was therefore imperative that inservice opportunities be provided for teachers to further their understanding of the nature of language, how language and literacy are acquired and developed and the role of language in learning.

The need for staff development extended to teacher educators as well as teachers, and particularly to teacher educators and tertiary teachers in fields other than language and literacy education.

Inservice initiatives need to:

- support teachers and teacher educators in the ongoing development of their own expertise;
- provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with each other and with other professionals working and researching in the field;
- build on and extend preservice understandings through a critical analysis of the specific cultural contexts of the schools in which teachers are located;
- actively engage teachers in reading and writing and provide opportunities for teachers to develop competence in a range of genres;

- facilitate the attendance of teachers at major conferences.

Recommendation 4

That the Board of Teacher Registration draw to the attention of all employing authorities the need for an ongoing commitment to inservice education in language and literacy for all teachers, including:

(i) social and cultural studies which examine language use in a range of communities and cultures, and

(ii) the role of language and literacy and the use of language in the disciplines they teach.

Recommendation 5

That the Board of Teacher Registration promote the provision of staff development programs in language and literacy for staff members of higher education institutions who are involved in the preservice education of teachers.

There was clearly a need for a coordinated, coherent range of professional development opportunities to be developed, including arrangements for collaboration between employing authority providers and higher education institutions. Collaboration was needed to ensure that preservice and inservice programs were articulated and to enable the development of fully articulated language education programs and awards, such as graduate certificates. Adequate funding provision was also needed to allow realistic access to inservice education by all teachers.

Consultancy services in language and literacy education needed to be maintained and extended, and there needed to be careful selection and training of consultants.

There was a particular need to ensure that teacher induction activities for beginning teachers provided support to enable them to implement teaching strategies with confidence and success. This had implications for the literacy and language education competence of teachers who supervised, supported or assessed beginning teachers (as well as student teachers).

Participants agreed that the workshop conference had demonstrated the value of developing closer ties between teachers in all levels of education - early childhood, primary, secondary, TAFE and tertiary. This should be pursued through an ongoing, regular program of activities and dissemination of information concerning language and literacy education focusing on current research and on changes in the ways language is used in the workplace and in the wider community.

Participants generally saw a role for the Board of Teacher Registration in promoting or coordinating collaboration in inservice teacher education among employers, higher education institutions, teacher organisations, community bodies and teachers generally. This role should include initiating research into the provision of inservice education and identifying areas of inservice needs. It should also seek to ensure that inservice language and literacy education courses had in place a consistent set of objectives, matched by appropriate pedagogy, and assessment procedures which reflected those objectives and pedagogy.

Recommendation 6

That the Board of Teacher Registration take action to initiate:

(i) the establishment of a mechanism for collaboration in inservice teacher education involving the Board, employing authorities, higher education institutions, teacher organisations, teachers and community bodies to ensure the development, implementation and monitoring of a strategic plan for continuing professional education for teachers in Queensland;

(ii) the establishment of a regular program of activities and dissemination of information in the area of language and literacy education designed to develop and maintain close ties between teachers at all levels of education and to promote awareness of current research and of changes in the ways language is used in the workplace and the community.

4. Implications for Teacher Registration

(a) *Initial Registration*

Some participants argued that initial teacher registration should be for specific age ranges and/or subject areas. In order to be registered, graduates would need to satisfy the Board that, *inter alia*, they had completed a program which included language, literacy and language education studies appropriate to the age range and subject areas to be taught. This would help to ensure not only that all teachers had an adequate understanding of language, literacy and language education, but also that teachers who had not been adequately prepared as specialist English teachers could not teach English in secondary schools.

Other participants felt that such a requirement would be unworkable in practice and expensive to administer, and would not give an adequate recognition to teachers' capacities for ongoing professional growth.

Recommendation 7

That, in consultation with employing authorities, higher education institutions, teacher unions, teachers and the community, the Board of Teacher Registration give further consideration to the problems of teachers required to teach outside the age ranges and subject areas for which they have been prepared.

(b) *Continuing Registration*

Some participants suggested that continuing professional development in areas such as language and literacy education was of such vital importance that ongoing participation in inservice education should be a requirement for continued teacher registration.

One group suggested that the Board of Teacher Registration should recommend the establishment of a Ministerial Committee (involving higher education institutions, employing authorities, teacher unions, teachers and community bodies) to develop and implement a Strategic Plan for Continuing Teacher Development - especially with respect to language and literacy education. The group suggested that, in principle, the renewal of registration of all teachers should require the successful completion of programs of inservice education, the scope and nature of which would be determined by the Board of Teacher Registration in consultation with the Ministerial Committee.

Other participants noted that the issue of term registration had been exhaustively canvassed by the former Board of Teacher Education in its *Project 21* inquiry. The concept had been strongly opposed by teachers and the Board had recommended against its introduction.

5. Action Arising from the Conference

Participants were anxious that the impetus generated by the conference not be lost. It was suggested that an editorial group be formed, including representatives of all working groups, to develop a draft report, based on the collated proposals from the working groups, for consideration by the Board of Teacher Registration.

It was also suggested that a working party be appointed by the Board of Teacher Registration to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the conference.

Recommendation 8

> That the Board of Teacher Registration appoint a working party on language and literacy to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of this conference.

6. Recommendations

The recommendations arising from the concluding session of the conference may be summarised as follows:

Preservice Teacher Education

Recommendation 1

That the Board of Teacher Registration's Guidelines for the Acceptance of Preservice Teacher Education Courses for Registration Purposes include the following requirements:

(i) that all preservice teacher education programs include core studies in language, literacy and language education for all teacher education students;

(ii) that both education foundations and curriculum studies for all teacher education students have a strong socio-cultural orientation which examines language in use and the relationship between language and power in a range of communities and cultures;

(iii) that all subjects in preservice teacher education programs take account of the role of language and literacy and of the socio-cultural implications of the use of language in the discipline concerned.

Recommendation 2

That all preservice teacher education programs incorporate procedures to ensure that graduating teachers will have achieved a level of personal language competence appropriate to the demands of the profession.

Recommendation 3

That, in order to accommodate the needs of prospective teachers in language, literacy and language education as well as in other areas, all preservice teacher education programs involve at least four years of tertiary study and not less than the equivalent of three semesters of professional studies.

Inservice Teacher Education

Recommendation 4

That the Board of Teacher Registration draw to the attention of all employing authorities the need for an ongoing commitment to inservice education in language and literacy education for all teachers, including:

(i) social and cultural studies which examine language use in a range of communities and cultures, and

(ii) the role of language and literacy and the use of language in the disciplines they teach.

Recommendation 5

That the Board of Teacher Registration promote the provision of staff development programs in language and literacy for all staff members of higher education institutions who are involved in the preservice education of teachers.

Recommendation 6

That the Board of Teacher Registration take action to initiate:

(i) the establishment of a mechanism for collaboration in inservice teacher education involving the Board, employing authorities, higher education institutions, teacher organisations, teachers and community bodies to ensure the development, implementation and monitoring of a strategic plan for continuing professional education for teachers in Queensland;

(ii) the establishment of a regular program of activities and dissemination of information in the area of language and literacy education designed to develop and maintain close ties between teachers at all levels of education and to promote awareness of current research and of changes in the ways language is used in the workplace and the community.

Teacher Deployment

Recommendation 7

That, in consultation with employing authorities, higher education institutions, teacher unions, teachers and the community, the Board of Teacher Registration give further consideration to the problems of teachers required to teach outside the age ranges and subject areas for which they have been prepared.

Recommendation 8

That the Board of Teacher Registration appoint a working party on language and literacy to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of this conference.

APPENDIX I

SPEAKERS' PRESENTATIONS IN FULL

DR LARRY MIKULECKY

In his presentation, Dr Mikulecky indicated that the content had been drawn largely from three of his papers, copies of which were provided for conference participants. These papers are listed in the Bibliography (Appendix II).

The following speakers kindly provided to the Board, for inclusion in this report, copies of the papers from which their presentations were drawn:

MR GARTH BOOMER

DR ALLAN LUKE

MS ROSIE WICKERT

DR PEGGY NIGHTINGALE

DR RODNEY HUDDLESTON

DR BILL CORCORAN

DR TREVOR CAIRNEY

THE PRESERVICE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS WITH REGARD TO LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION: LOOKING TO THE YEAR 2000

Garth Boomer
Department of Education, South Australia

Introduction

While this contribution to the debate will focus on preservice preparation of intending teachers, I need to register from the outset that no preparation however comprehensive, will be sufficient to meet the requirements. That is, having made the best possible attempt to prepare the acolyte teacher, we must accept that a good deal of further learning will be required on the job and in continuing inservice education throughout each teacher's career.

Before we enter too far into the details of what might be feasible, sensible, apposite and 'state of the art' in preservice preparation in the field of language education, we need to clarify as far as we can the likely structure and process of preservice teacher education into the 90s.

A Likely Preservice Scenario

I understand, for instance, that an AEC (Australian Education Council) working party on teacher education may be recommending a three-year Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science with a teaching orientation as a prerequisite, followed by two years on a form of internship containing both study and a part-time teaching load.

While I have some questions about the content and orientation of a first degree course in such a scenario, I suspect that this is a pattern which will be likely to emerge. I am especially supportive of the notion of a part-time teaching internship over two years because I believe that the most powerful and lasting learnings of anything emerge on the job in real applications provided that coaching, input of pertinent information and time for reflection on action is part of the formula. I will, therefore, take a punt that something along these lines will emerge into the nineties and thereby add more weight to the lobbying for such a dispensation which will occur over the next few years.

This being the prognosticated case, teacher preparation institutions will be required to develop far closer links with the field, to reconstrue the whole fairly sorry present business of teaching practice, and to consider the recruitment of new kinds of educational coaches, who can work in teams both in schools and in reflection on schools along with teacher tutors and teacher mentors with advanced skills, appointed under new award restructures.

Given a situation which will allow much more intensive learning on the job in conjunction with the opportunity for theorising practice over the end-on internship years, courses as part of the initial degree will also need to be reconstrued and reconstituted.

In other words, teacher preparation institutions will have to undertake a complete overhaul of what they are presently doing. This is timely and I believe necessary as we face a crisis in teacher quality and confront the challenge of lifting the status of teaching. This conference could not come at a more appropriate time.

In addressing specific needs in the preparation of teachers in the field of language and education or language in learning, we need first to consider the context and demands.

Context

Australia is in the process of being industrially reconstructed in the national economic interest. We are told with reasonable conviction that the recovery must be brain-led and competency based. We will need a combination of hands and heads on, a new kind of mindful, productive practice if we are to compete in the international economic scene. Broadly, that is the economic challenge - to release and apply brain power in adding value to resources.

Aligned with this, or at least adjacent to it, is the languages challenge. Multicultural though Australia is, it is nevertheless an alarmingly mono-lingual country if we look at our education systems. Numbers of students taking languages through to the end of schooling have declined. University language facilities are not flourishing. Culturally we need all our citizens to learn at least one language other than English, if it is accepted that learning a second language will increase perceptiveness, empathy, wisdom and communicative competence. Economically (though this is a weaker connection), learning the languages of our major trading partners will be an advantage. Languages are a valuable economic resource. In this country they are understated. This is the languages challenge.

Ecologically we are in national and global strife. Soil erosion, 'greenhouse' effect, waste disposal problems (including nuclear waste) and diminishing fuel/energy sources all tax the survival capacity of the citizenry. We need to get on a steep learning curve and keep learning. This is the environmental challenge.

Cliched though it is, the technological revolution is palpable. The media of communication grow daily in sophistication and reach. The brain-amplifying power of computers and video disks burgeons. Work practices change with the introduction of robotics and other technologies. The visual medium outpaces the written. Technology, having been created by human minds, now has the capacity to act back on the creating mind and transform the ways in which the world is construed. This is the technological challenge.

The age of reason and enlightenment is coming to an end. The old linear rationalist paradigms are proving not up to the job. Newtonian physics has been dead for 50 years or more and yet society has not caught up with the implications of relativity and quantum theories. In all fields of academic endeavour, 'post modern' paradigms are revolutionising thinking. For example, we have chaos theory in mathematics, new understandings of the falsity of mind/body distinctions in medicine, 'holistic' insights into linguistics, sociology and psychology and new appreciations of the myth of objectivity in science. Meanwhile an education system hardly qualifying as modern, looks more and more out of touch with the edges of new thinking. This is the 'post modern' challenge. The present common sense of education is inadequate for the job in hand.

Demands

Opinions about the demands of the 'workplace' in the future vary. Some say that the new technologies will actually require less capacity for thinking amongst the masses, such that a new, more intensely oppressed, residual underclass of disenfranchised citizens will be created alongside a technologically knowledgeable elite. Others contend that the literacy/communication/ thinking demands of the workplace and society are increasing. My argument would be that in either case language/thinking/communication capacity is crucial in the fight against political oppression and ignorance in the first case and in order to cope linguistically (to maintain productivity), in the second. Information, or rather information interpreted, is power and if power to the people in a democratic and just society is our aim then we need to educate all in how to access 'secrets'. Being able to read the world with subtlety ('cultural literacy') is a worthy goal for all citizens. This requires more than the basics or fundamentals of literacy. The 'texts' (in the broadest sense of the word) of the world are proliferating and becoming even more promiscuous. Image, sound, word, gesture interact to make rich meanings. The new society demands a rigorous education in reading texts. Language demands have become semiotic demands.

Unfortunately, teaching has a very strong tendency to reproduce itself. Most of our primary and secondary teachers (even our secondary English teachers) have had little language education (even with respect to traditional grammar) and even less education in the understanding of the visual medium. Literature, narrowly defined, has been the predominant undergraduate textual fodder and this has been studied less as a social semiotic than as a kind of scripture to be investigated and cited. It has not been used well to illuminate the present and it has not reflected the richness of how texts (even in the fictive mode) function in society. The study of literature (like the study of mathematics and science) has been abstracted from the commerce of contemporary society.

And so, if we look to higher education institutions to break the cycle of reproduction we will find a dearth of people with the kind of language/cultural studies background able to take courses in language semiotics in education. Teachers at this level can only teach what they know. What they know, by and large, is unequal to the task as I see it.

Looking to the workplace the rhetoric is that we will need more graduates from schools and higher education who are communicatively adept, flexible, enterprising, cooperative and thoughtful. The workplace would seem to be demanding the capacity to negotiate meaning with ever-increasing sophistication. Cynically, one might need to add, 'so long as it serves the needs of the company and increased productivity'. My view is that before we take the rhetoric too literally, we need to get into a thorough going analysis of the real linguistic/semiotic demands of various present workplaces, in terms of functionality, as well as an assessment of the needs of a new workforce which will be restructured to incorporate multiskilling, team work, group evaluation and proactive advice to management. There will be a new practical/technical demand on language in the workforce but also new social/communicative/ political demands - not to mention higher order thinking demands (if you accept the more optimistic scenario about work).

Language in Education

In these contexts with these demands, what are our institutions of teacher preparation to do?

In the first place, I think those in power positions in terms of deciding the curriculum diet of teachers-to-be need themselves to undergo some kind of redecoration of the insides of their heads. Unless you happen to have been exposed to detailed expositions of the role of languages in learning (and life), as an educator, you are likely to conceive of language in very narrow terms which relate to 'literacy' (falsely seen as a unitary achievement) and conventional, technical accuracy in the conveying of ideas; that is, language as a tool to be manipulated, rather than as a resource for meaning-making which varies with context, purpose and audience and which acts dialectically with thinking to shape the learner's construction of reality. Translate the narrow view of language into teacher preparation and you get perhaps a foundation course in 'literacy' and a spattering of 'language in science', or 'language in history' options which will deal largely with vocabulary and conventions. That would probably amount to more than most undergraduates get at present but it is by no means enough.

Start with the assumption that language is central to learning and shapes our construction of reality, and you would construct a far more pervasive culture of language learning in the preparation of teachers, ensuring that formally and incidentally they are continually confronting questions of learning language, learning about language and learning through language. Indeed one would want the learning at undergraduate level to build upon a similar regime in primary and secondary school.

Let me do some 'visioning'. (This is a new buzz word in business and industry and is a prerequisite to 'missioning' and strategic planning!)

I start with the acknowledgment that the business of schools is formal learning; the development of the human intellect. Therefore, above all else, intending teachers must become experts in teaching and the learning which attends or is provoked by teaching. This requires that each teacher has an articulated, highly-developed theory of learning in practice which informs the practice of teaching. All teachers have 'theories' at the implicit level, since teaching action is predicated on notions of what constitutes good teaching, but far less teachers are able to say why they do what they do in terms of a personalised theory of learning and teaching.

It is indeed strange that for many intending teachers the cultural amniotic of education in which they swim and have swum is transparent and largely unexamined. Education theory is first fragmented into contributing disciplines (philosophy, psychology, sociology, linguistics) and then abstracted from the intending teachers' experience. Piaget and Vygotsky are 'out there'; they are rarely subjected to testing against the experienced world of the teacher-learners.

So, no matter what configuration teacher preparation may have, I would wish to mandate and test the development of a personalised practical theory of teaching/learning based on the examined life of teaching/learning to this point in the intending teacher's career. I would want to require a course in the first semester of entrance to a higher education institution which would ask students to reflect upon their educational experience, to formulate some interim hypotheses about how they (and others) seem to learn and to undertake to test these hypotheses in relation to their undergraduate teaching/learning and their own practice of teaching in schools. This would be to make opaque and problematical education in general and learning/teaching in particular.

Formal, deliberate, systematic and sustained reflection on their own experience of education as learners and teachers would be the cornerstone of their preparation to be teachers. This would require higher education lecturers and tutors to expose and articulate their own theories and to subject their teaching to formal appraisal and critique by those to whom it is directed. In this way education would be put on the curriculum not as a fragmented abstraction but as a discipline to be theorised and practised. The strength of the developed theorised practice would be formally assessed at various points during the years of preparation.

Given this fundamental, mandated study of learning-in-practice, it would then be possible to feed in the partial or special theories of others like Piaget or Bruner who think not as teachers but as psychologists. It would also be possible to introduce formal studies about the relationship between language and learning, and language and thinking. The well-rounded teacher of the 21st century, no matter what his or her speciality, must understand the way in which language and thinking interrelate. Such study cannot be optional given that it is at the heart of the mission of schooling. What better way to gain entry to these notions than to study in a new area and then reflect on how language kept you out, let you in and supported your grasping of concepts? Rather than have an abstracted offering called 'language in learning', a unit or units of 'content' area work could be extended to require reflection on language and learning as it operated in a unit. This would, of course, require teachers able and courageous enough to conduct such critical meta-activity on their own work. In particular, it would require all teachers or intending teachers to have a sound grasp of the role of language in learning.

With this general assurance or insurance that all teachers-to-be will be reinforced and extended as critical practising theorists about the art and craft of teaching, I would see the need for the development of special insights into language, obligatory for intending primary school teachers and for secondary teachers aiming to teach 'English' and/or communication studies (including media). I would see the language of discourse of subject specialities, especially at the secondary level, being best taught by specialist science lecturers, mathematics lecturers, etc. This would require all lecturers in the 'content' area to upgrade and ensure that they have a sound grasp of the way specific genres work in their discipline. Of course, many intelligent, perceptive and reflective teachers could make explicit a good deal of what they 'naturally' know about the language of their specific discourse, but access to and understanding of the key insights of, say, systemic linguistics would enable them to teach with greater confidence and insight. We are far from this state of affairs at present when even our so-called language/literature specialists may lack solid grounding in language studies. People like me, educated as secondary English teachers in the 50s and 60s, were literature-trained. It was assumed that the grammar (Latin based) that we learnt in school would suffice in terms of language knowledge.

Secondary English teachers and primary teachers who have special responsibilities for language teaching will need to be prepared with more serious studies in language in use. There is a limit to what can be packed in to an undergraduate curriculum but no primary teacher or secondary English teacher should be allowed into our schools without a general course in language development and language in use, with primary studies concentrating on the learning of literacy and secondary English teachers having an in-depth course in semiotics for beginners, particularly covering the role of literature and 'storying' in society.

I would want all these teachers to be confident and competent producers of written texts so that they can demonstrate to students how to do the same.

In summary, as an employer of new teachers I would want to ask the following questions of all:

1. Do you have a working, personalised practical theory of teaching/learning?

2. Do you understand how language and thinking interrelate and can you, therefore, devise teaching/learning episodes which enhance thinking and conceptual grasp through the use of language?

3. Whatever you teach, can you explain to your students how language operates in the various 'texts' you and they use and can you teach them how to increase their capacities in producing such texts?

In addition, for primary teachers and all secondary 'English' teachers, I would ask:

1. Have you a sound grounding in language in use such that you can confidently talk about how various key genres operate and how language functions in different contexts with different purposes and different audiences?

2. Can you demonstrate, yourself, how to produce required texts and analyse how you do it?

As to the specific content of courses, I would leave this to those who have the best knowledge of the most up-to-date sources and topics. I would simply want to insist that whatever is taught enhances the fledgling teacher's capacity to produce texts and to teach others to produce.

Having been involved in many accreditation panels for higher education awards and courses in language in education, I have been struck, usually, by how little attention is given to the processes and methods of teaching to be employed. If the reproductive cycle is to be broken, teacher preparation institutions must consciously and strictly attempt to demonstrate what they would hope to see happening in schools. They should be models of the best teaching based on state of the art research and experimentation into the art and science of teaching.

In particular, they should be exemplary in:

1. making explicit that which they do and seeking critiques on plans and practices;

2. making explicit, in particular, the criteria by which work will be valued and providing detailed feedback on performance in the light of these criteria;

3. providing formal time for reflection and critique of practice (both the students' and teachers' practice).

The possibility of the two-year part-time internship considered earlier is exciting in this regard. Schools under such a scheme would be working laboratories for the testing of plans and hypotheses where experienced teacher mentors, higher education lecturers and teachers-to-be, would form a professional team dedicated to the formation of progressively better theorised practice. Assignments for award courses could be easily grounded in action research or practicums focused on work in the field. This would be a consummation devoutly to be wished in rescuing teacher education from the realms of abstraction and fragmentation in the jungles of multiple disciplines and according it proper status as an integrated discipline in its own right - an applied science every bit as crucial as medicine, engineering or law. Under such a regime we could anticipate better teachers and a higher professional status for teaching and education amongst the public and in higher education circles.

NO SINGLE METHOD: CRITICAL APPROACHES TO THE PREPARATION OF LITERACY TEACHERS

Allan Luke,
James Cook University of North Queensland

A Montage

In this, the International Year of Literacy, perhaps a montage of scenes from diverse places and times can assist us to rethink the 'new':

> - In the mid-1970s, as part of their comprehensive volume on the US National Right to Read Program, John B. Carroll and Jeanne S. Chall called for major reform of the teaching of reading. As David Olson and Frank Smith later pointed out, nobody at the time questioned their preferred strategy: the updating and extension of basal-style 'systematic reading instruction' and assessment across the board and into secondary grades.
>
> - In 1962, David Russell, Professor of Reading at the University of California and author of the Ginn Basic Readers, addressed a regional conference of reading teachers in New Westminster, British Columbia. He argued that we were on the verge of major breakthroughs towards reading pedagogy which would stress 'critical thinking'.
>
> - In 1936, H.B. King, Chief Inspector of Schools of the Province of British Columbia, announced in a Royal Commission report that a new age had dawned for educators: child-centred education, pivoting around the introduction of an 'enterprise method' which stressed thematic, project based activity, would eliminate the rote, skill and drill methods of previous eras.
>
> - In 1922, E.L. Thorndike and Arthur Gates, the founders of modern educational psychology at Teachers College in New York, wrote that the possibility existed for the ultimate instructional technology for reading: self-instructional texts that children could guide themselves through without need for teacher intervention.

- In 1911, E.B. Huey, the first American reading researcher, called for the replacement of the strict '3 Rs' pedagogy with the mandatory study of 'reading hygiene' by all teachers.

The history of modernist literacy instruction is one of panaceas and magic bullets sourced in 'state of the art' educational science. Twentieth century teachers and principals have encountered successive pedagogical movements, vogues and 'Truths', which often have offered salvation not only from classroom literacy-related problems, but also from a range of social ills. It is a history of schools and teachers and governments held accountable for literacy 'crises', and all the related symptoms which have become allied with educational decline in the public imagination, from AIDS to multiculturalism, from brain drains to balance of payments problems, from Sputniks to subversive threats. The politically-motivated, and quite often irrational, character of literacy crises is typified in the postwar pro-phonics campaign, when word recognition approaches to beginning reading were characterised as yet another Moscow-based plot to weaken the fibre of English-speaking youth.

I've retitled my talk today 'no single method' - a play on the title of Rosie Wickert's recent report on adult literacy - not to suggest that there isn't a particular path that we should be following in teacher education. As will become apparent, I offer quite specific prescriptions for literacy-related teacher education curricula. Rather my aim is to redirect our attention from the ongoing debate over the 'right' methods for teaching reading and writing (e.g. whole language or genre, word recognition or phonics, basal or literature-based, reader-response or classicist) to the imperative for teacher education to provide theories and understandings about language and literacy, discourses and cultures. To provide a context for the policy decisions we confront here, I review selected cross-cultural, historical and sociological research on literacy, a literature which, not incidentally, usually is omitted from conferences such as this one and from teacher education courses.

This context allows us to reframe the central issue not as one of determining 'which method is best' but instead as one of combating teacher deskilling, of enhancing teachers' critical control over their teaching, and of reforming those instructional and administrative systems which turn down their opportunity to assert authoritative professional knowledge and competence. I argue for the need for all student teachers to undertake some variation of 'critical linguistic studies' (Kress, 1985; Fairclough, 1989; cf. Montgomery, 1986). And I conclude by outlining some courses which we have begun implementing at James Cook University of North Queensland.

I should begin by foregrounding my own reading position and political investment in these proceedings. At James Cook I teach reading/language arts education, sociology of education and discourse analysis. I currently am doing discourse analyses of classroom talk and textbooks with an eye to explaining power and knowledge relationships in classroom literacy events, and how literacy teaching services, and potentially counters, the cross-generational production and reproduction of class, gender and culture. My previous work centred on the sociology of literacy curriculum, teaching and assessment across historical eras. *Literacy, Textbooks and Ideology* (1988), from which the foregoing vignettes were drawn, mapped the rise of basal reader and skills approaches to Canadian and US literacy instruction, and the dominance of educational psychology as the key disciplinary source for 'truths' about literacy learning. This history, I suspect, offers us particularly salutary points for policy and planning.

Literacies in Context

Literacy crises have been legion since the founding of state school systems across Western nation-states. Contrary to widely circulated claims of journalists and politicians, such crises are less indicative of problems intrinsic to schools, teachers and 'methods' and are more indicative of larger shifts in the structures of labour and the polity, capital and industry. This isn't to say that functional literacy problems don't provide very real impediments to particular groups within the Australian populace; nor is it to counter the need for innovative and powerful strategies to enfranchise those groups historically excluded from educational achievement - the children of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Kanak, migrant and working class communities. But it is to point out that the emergence of literacy crises seems to be tied to efforts to reestablish ideological legitimacy and public loyalty for schooling and the state. Literacy crises arise in situations where schooling in general and literacy in particular are looked upon by the political right and left alike to ameliorate perceived economic and social malaise.

Hence the idiom of 'back to the basics' movements often is an unsubtle cloaking device for calls for moral restoration, ideological purity and economic discipline. It is an exemplar of effective political discourse, a rhetorical empty set which enables addressees (e.g. wet or dry, Protestant or Catholic, right or left, male or female, teachers or stockbrokers, real estate salespeople or barristers, farmers or scuba divers) to conjure up any particular remembrance of literacy past that they believe represents and serves their interests: from white picketed fence communities where Dick and Dora could spell and do long division, to the mythical epoch before the ball point pen when all handwriting was decipherable; from classrooms where discipline was the order of the day and 'excellence' achieved by an elite, to that postwar utopia where workers in English-speaking countries outproduced everyone else in those decolonised sites which we then called 'underdeveloped countries'.

Fortunately or unfortunately, there is nothing in the historical record since the industrial revolution which indicates that schooling or literacy is capable of solving economic crises. Even the current Japanese (or Korean, or Taiwanese) 'economic miracle', so easily ascribed to superior models of schooling, is more readily attributable to radically different structures of labour and production, government/industry relations, political configurations, multinational markets and spheres of influence and so forth. Suffice to say, achievement of economic, political and (if that is your interest) military prowess cannot be attributed directly to schooling or literacy. And to make this argument is quite simply to one-dimensionalise complex events and structures.

So regardless of what we do today or in subsequent policy moves, it is unlikely to have the kinds of direct socioeconomic consequences in and of itself that many politicians, consultants, employers and special-interest groups might seek. Specific outcomes of schooling and literacy may in fact be significant enabling factors in economic and political change - but they are neither sufficient nor necessary conditions for such change. In this light, any proposals we make must engage with the diversity of systemic social, economic and cultural changes currently underway. It also suggests to politicians, government agencies and communities that educational reform - whether geared for equity or economic expansion - must be articulated in relation to larger social policies and movements.

There is ample evidence that current educational planning and curricula have stopped far short of such considerations. We might pause to assess, for example, the failure of curricula and instruction to engage in any sustained manner the major changes in cultural identity and subjectivity which have accompanied postmodern consumer/media culture.

Consider, further, changes in the structure of work: the effects of increased subcontracting and the shift from 'economies of scale' to 'economies of scope' would suggest that our students are likely to undergo two, three or more career changes during their lifecycles. Consider the rapid movement of the Australian economy not from primary industries to a secondary manufacturing infrastructure, but rather towards a multinational, service, information economy. American, UK and Canadian precedents not mentioned in this forum would suggest that many jobs in these growth sectors ('fast-foods' or 'take-aways', janitorial, care for the aged, retail sales, tourism and hospitality, word processing) are lower paying and deskilled. Fast-foods is one of the fastest growing multinational businesses (7 per cent per annum), a $90 billion (Aus.) annual enterprise in the US alone (*Chicago*

Tribune, 10 September 1990); most employees in this sector are paid at the minimum wage.

Where curricula have attempted to engage with economic changes, often the results have been less than encouraging. In spite of the continuing rhetoric which ties 'high tech' with both social equity and economic competitiveness, there is ample evidence of the failure of educational programs in computer literacies to effectively enfranchise women, Aborigines and Islanders, migrants and working-class Australians into any greater economic and political power.

Finally, reconsider the industrial-era formula that improved literacy equals industrial performance and economic growth. In the 1980s the engines of growth of multinational corporations were not skilled workforces, much less reading and writing populaces, but rather leveraged buy-outs and mergers, the export of assembly and service activities to inexpensive labour markets and of ecologically 'dirty' industries to those same countries, and the opening of consumer markets in 'developing' nations. What these and other global, 'postmodern' trends signal is that to see the improvement of literacy education in terms of 'fine tuning' existing systems, to argue that particular methods or approaches will yield unmediated and unambiguous results in terms of economic expansion or 'empowerment' is at best Quixotic, and at worst counterproductive.

A view of the educational enterprise in terms of the neutral pursuit of the best method for achieving 'literacy', or 'reading', or 'writing' ignores both the embeddedness of literacy in sociocultural contexts and its variability and malleability as a social technology. On the former point, consider the work of William S. Gray, founder of the International Reading Association and designer of the modern standardised reading achievement test and basal reading series. Gray may have thought he was 'fine-tuning' instruction to simply increase reading achievement - but his particular approach to reading, which we are now so patently sceptical of, dominated American (and later, Canadian and Australian) education largely because it serviced inter- and post-war industrial expansion. We encounter in the historical literature other instances where literacy is constructed by schools and curricula in coincidence with particular imperatives of social structure, work and ideology.

On the latter point, literacy as a social technology is not fixed or static, but rather the social practices we prescribe, valorise and transmit to students are malleable and selective. For instance, the sixteenth century Swedish literacy campaign apparently achieved a high degree of literacy, upwards of 90 per cent by parish records, without schooling. However the church-based literacy taught comprised Bible reading, not writing. By contrast, for 19th century Australian and Canadian students what counted as literacy centred on oral recitation from memory, copybook work, and, in advanced grades, imitation of literary 'classics'. My point here is that different pedagogies yield differing literacies. The social functions and uses, contexts of use, linguistic conventions and even cognitive competences engendered by literacy training have varied greatly across cultures and histories. Since Martin Luther's time, through the 19th century Royal Readers era, through the emergence of Dick and Dora readers, literacy training has been about forming, shaping and controlling literacies and literates in concert with particular political, economic and cultural agendas. In effect, schools construct a literate subject.

To believe then that there is a single, unitary, static entity called 'literacy' is in error. Nor should the debate turn on which instructional approach 'works' best. Through the lenses of history, we can see that school-based literacy has less to do with 'more or less' literacy, and more to do with questions like: What kinds of literacies are constructed by schooling? What kinds of social practices with text are valorised? Which groups of children are they distributed to? To what ends? In whose interests? To return to my initial point - it is only in the context of larger questions of ideology, equity and justice, economic and cultural practices that we can reformulate policies and curricula.

Where our perennial pursuit of higher, universal literacy has led us we - as indicated by Larry Mikulecky's and Rosie Wickert's comments here, and by recent work by Heath (1983), Baker and Freebody (1989) and others - is a fair degree of success at teaching what might be called 'school literacy'. That is, schools more or less successfully transmit highly specialised kinds of competence with text, how to do things with text. Unfortunately, many such competences run into the problem of 'transfer of training' to community and workplace and may have applicability only within the practices, events and sites of schooling.

There are no universal 'basics'. Literacy is a malleable social technology, a social construction which cannot be examined, much less reformed, in isolation of economic, cultural and political contexts and outcomes. In this light, there is no single method, but rather there are multiple paths to different literacies, all artifices of culture, all reflecting differing political interests and investments. This said, it is not simply a matter of paying one's capital investment into program X and taking one's chances. Rather, what is needed in a postindustrial, postmodern society are teachers who understand this variability and can in effect engage in debate with their colleagues, with communities and parents, and with students about what kinds of literacy ought to be taught: and students with broad critical competences which give them the requisite educability and flexibility to survive in a changing economic market, and to participate critically in community and national decision-making. Having taken this normative position, I would argue that beginning teachers need a matrix of understandings of language and literacy in social context to develop and to engage critically with curricula across the long run of their careers.

Deskilling in Teacher Education

Just as her or his counterpart in the factory or office, a teacher who began work in the 1950s might have had to weather successive waves of workplace 'innovation'. These might have ranged from SRA-style programmed instruction, to emphases on experiential/thematic teaching, to curricular packages for 'critical thinking'. Another teacher trained in the language experience, creative writing approaches of the early to mid-1970s, by contrast, might have encountered a diversity of approaches with strict basal reader instruction and perhaps culminating in contemporary 'shared-book' instruction, which requires sophisticated understandings of psycholinguistic models of text processing and the linguistic structures of text. Regardless of what we prognosticate for literacy teaching, over a typical 15 to 30 year career today's beginning teachers are likely to encounter and to debate, hopefully critically, diverse and often contradictory agendas for the teaching of literacy - reforms which, I have stressed, are often sourced and rationalised in terms of larger economic and political investments.

Understandably, extant teacher training programs are oriented towards delivering to teachers 'state of the art' classroom methods and practices. In many programs, 'methods' subjects accompanied with school-based practica begin in students' first year of teacher training; moreover, many current programs lack altogether a foundational introduction to theories of language structure, use and development (*Teacher Education for Literacy*, 1990: 6-11).

In the long run, a preservice teacher training which stresses efficient classroom methods and techniques with extant curricular programs risks yielding deskilled teaching, where beginning teachers enact a particular set of classroom methods and procedures with little theoretical understanding of what they are doing. As the basal reader model so tellingly signals, virtually anyone can be taught to enact a classroom script. But critical teaching - self-reflective teaching which is based on a 'reading' of children's knowledges, competences and backgrounds - requires theoretical understandings of why, how and to what end particular classroom strategies work. I define theory here not as a set of abstract 'truths' about language, schooling and society, but rather as a dynamic, grounded set of knowledges about points of correlation and contention between theories, and indeed some understanding about how theories are built, criticised and selected in the first instance. Such foundational knowledge enables the many critical teachers currently at work to see and construct theory/practice relationships in the classroom, and thereby to respond thoughtfully and constructively when materials and approaches do not work, rather than blaming students, programs, communities or themselves.

My argument here, then, is simple: teacher training can deskill beginning teachers by not providing foundational understandings and professional opportunities to conceptualise alternative, autonomous decisions about curricular selection, instruction and assessment. Various sociologists have described the process of deskilling in terms of the separation of centrally controlled work, whether that of teachers or office workers, factory workers or managers. In the case of teaching, deskilling can result from dependence on particular instructional/methodological scripts - whether those from teachers' guidebooks or particularly formulaic approaches in methods and inservice courses. The archetypal cases, of course, involve step-by-step guidebooks which accompany basal or enlarged book series. But the same analysis might hold for any approach wherein a particular instructional technology or method begins standardising teachers' work. In effect, teachers can be put in the position of relinquishing their authoritative knowledge over learning, literacy and their capacity to make local, site-specific decisions about their teaching and students' learning. This can be the result of regional and school administration which discourages classroom innovation, adaptation and negotiation; equally, it can result from a lack of critical and theoretical grounding on the part of the teacher her/himself.

The problem of deskilling crosses the curriculum. And it is compounded by the significant demands for theoretical understandings of language characteristic of virtually all current approaches to literacy. Let me exemplify the point: in recent classroom and inservice work with various student and practising teachers, several colleagues and I have noted some of the following patterns:

- acceptance of any enlarged text or trade book available as sufficient for a 'literature-based program' and a failure to think through linguistic, literacy and cultural criteria for the selection of children's literature;

- use of enlarged print books exclusively for group oral reading and talking about affective responses to characters and pictures; lacking is an understanding of the reading process and an understanding of the linguistic and ideational structures of text;

- process-style writing programs in which editorial advice based on teacher understanding of how diverse kinds of non-fiction and fiction texts work is absent;

- lack of informed consideration about how the linguistic and cultural competence of children from minority groups might influence response to classroom talk and texts;

- attempts to teach content-area reading comprehension with little understanding of the characteristic linguistic, generic and ideological features of textbook prose.

Of course, we also observed many excellent teachers and classroom programs, where professional and collegial knowledge about language, literacy and learners' cultures is used quite constructively. But what is missing in the above settings are foundational understandings of theoretical aspects of language and literacy.

I would argue that language, linguistics and literacy in education should be a mandatory subject for all certification programs in Queensland, for primary and secondary, English and science/maths students alike. Further, these understandings and knowledges can be introduced as something other than decontextualised textbook theory (e.g. the archetypal Linguistics 100); they can be acquired in the context of a critical linguistics which examines how language and discourse shapes everyday social relations in communities, mass cultural media and classrooms. What follows is a broad sketch of such a subject which Pam Gilbert and I have developed for all first-year primary and secondary students at James Cook.

Teachers as Critical Literates

Most Australian teacher education institutions presently are undergoing some kind of reorganisation and amalgamation. A typical byproduct has been a rhetorical and political symmetrisation between those advocates of broadly 'theoretical' approaches to teacher training, centred on educational foundations and a general liberal-arts education, and those advocates of more 'practical' course structures, featuring early and extensive school experience and comprehensive methods subjects. In this politically charged atmosphere, many teacher educators argue that the optimal way to address the sophisticated knowledges and competences required of teachers of literacy is to introduce more mandatory hours of language arts, reading and English education methods subjects early in training courses.

Our strategy has been quite different; and it is our belief that too often the 'more is better' approach to teacher education curricula is both financially non-viable in post-amalgamation courses and pedagogically ineffective in the preparation of critical, autonomous teachers. Our understanding of the problem, as stated, is that beginning teachers do not need 'more' methods and techniques - which can be covered effectively in curriculum subjects and during school experience, and acquired during their first full-time employment from colleagues, inservice programs and so forth. They need foundational understandings of how language works in social contexts. Further, I concur with the point made earlier by Larry Mikulecky: that many educators fail to attend to how language and literacy work outside of schools, in those domains of home and community, work and everyday social life.

In lieu of further methods courses, we have augmented traditional psychological and social foundations subjects with a mandatory first year course in language in society and education. Of course, there was some resistance to this idea from our colleagues - but we were aided by the international turn towards linguistics as a key social science, the perceived decline in university students' textual competence which Peggy Nightingale has critiqued here, and the sociocultural emphasis of our proposed subject.

Here I provide a very brief overview of the subject (see Gilbert & Luke in press/1991; Luke & Gilbert in press/1991 for more detailed descriptions of syllabus content, student activities and comments; cf. Bill Corcoran's contribution to this volume and John Carr's comments at this forum). It stands as an introduction to what could be broadly called 'critical linguistic studies' (Kress, 1985; Fairclough, 1989), which draws from systemic linguistics, the sociology of language and ethnography of communication, and poststructuralist discourse theory. What distinguishes this approach from more traditional educational linguistics is its stress on how language is used to express and constitute power and ideology in everyday texts and talk. Through the analysis of popular and academic texts, we attempt to introduce students to aspects of grammar, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, and so forth by showing them how these apparently abstract, esoteric systems figure in popular and educational culture. The subject also introduces students to templates for language change, variation and development, with particular attention to language in Australian migrant and Aboriginal communities. Here we read and discuss case studies from the ethnography of communication and interactional sociolinguistics which describe actual language use in diverse kinds of homes, communities, workplaces and classrooms.

Readings and lectures lead on to tutorial-based text analysis activities where students dissect magazine advertisements, passages from popular fiction, newspaper headlines, bureaucratic memos, textbooks, children's writing and transcripts of classroom talk and interviews. For example, one activity centred on the use of the passive voice in government and school memos; another examined the use of the imperative in magazine advertising. Both of these analyses were done with an eye to how text ideologically positions and controls readers. Classroom and conversational transcripts were evaluated for turn-taking and 'speaking rights'; yet another activity centred around ethnographic accounts of language development and use across diverse social class and ethnic groups. These tutorials double as writing and reading workshops, where models of text processing and authoring are introduced to encourage students to analyse their own competences with a range of academic and institutional genres. Workshops have been articulated in concert with their other first year subjects, so that essay assignments for other subjects are broken down, analysed, drafted and revised.

We have tried to create a subject which integrates three roles typically segregated in university courses: a multidisciplinary language and social foundations subject; a college composition and study skills subject; and an educational studies subject which (subtly and perhaps covertly) prepares students for the classroom. This is a tall order, and no doubt some of our coverage has been cursory. But we believe that we have succeeded in the principal aim: to tune up students' ears and eyes to hear and see language as system in everyday texts, social relations and power. In this regard, its orientation dovetails nicely with their concurrent first-year studies in educational sociology and multiculturalism. We have, furthermore, argued successfully that such a course should appear early in their training - both to enhance their entrance-level textual skills and to teach them about language in a range of social contexts before the pressure to learn specialised classroom methods develops.

The subject was introduced in 1990, and we are still adjusting contents, format, activities and emphases in consultation with those lecturers who will pick up the students later in English education, language arts and reading, ESL and foreign language, and other methods subjects. Student response thus far has been extremely positive: contrary to all expectations for a theory-based subject with no 'how to' component, students rated it as the most 'useful' and 'eye-opening' subject they encountered. Lecturers now are planning their methods subjects under the assumption that students will bring some analytic capacity, for example, for identifying syntax and genre in a text or for 'second guessing' structures of conversation or classroom talk.

There might be one further, unintended side effect: I expect that many of these student teachers have excellent resources to draw upon to deflect those administrators, practising teachers and members of the community who complain that they know little about structures of language. Many have emerged from the subject knowing far more about language as social system than their critics.

Remaking Literacy

There is no cure-all, particularly given a realistic recognition of the larger systemic social and material constraints on educational reform identified in this forum and in this paper. Hence, I offer the above agenda as but a first approximation of an essential component for teacher education; its realisation is but a single step towards more critical approaches to literacy.

Its central premise is simple: that to become informed, self-reflective teachers of literacy - regardless of the methods or materials they or their schools choose - teachers themselves need to be critically literate. Such a critical literacy is achieved not by more hours of immersion in an instructional technology. As part of their broad liberal-arts education, beginning teachers need cross-disciplinary understandings and knowledges about language in social context. Powerful modes for analysing language and ideology in everyday life, not a version of 'theory as truth' divorced from practice, may enable them to combat deskilling, to engage with, critique and deploy effectively new classroom strategies, and to 'read' both children's cultures and language backgrounds, and the very media-saturated socio-economic milieu they confront.

But let's not neglect the very issues we have engaged in this forum. It would be ironic, and a telling sign of our own assumptions, to believe that we - academic 'experts' and consultants, state and board administrators, practising teachers and teacher union representatives - debate such matters as the politics of literacy in economic and cultural change, but then simply prescribe 'how to' subjects for teachers in training. I would reiterate the need for teachers, at the very earliest stages of their training, to begin debating the key questions foregrounded here: Which literacies? For whom? To what ends? I would hope that our students would leave teacher training with the background knowledge and theoretical understandings to engage critically across their careers with successive revolutions in 'method', successive governments and politically and economically driven reforms, and changes in the conditions and structures of their work.

Peter Freebody recently commented that once one views literacy as a social construction, utterly implicated in knowledge/power relationships in society, there is, quite literally, no going back. No going back to the safety and simplicity of belief that all that is at stake is 'skill acquisition', 'the basics', 'enhancing personal growth' or pushing test scores up. But such an insight is also a powerful one for policy, curricula and teacher education - one which challenges us to debate with colleagues, communities and students how we can most effectively engage with the future of literate cultures.

Postcript from Chicago

At the conclusion of the April conference, I noted that of the many jurisdictions caught in the alleged 'crisis' of literacy in English-speaking countries, Queensland was in a unique position, one which held a range of possibilities for the implementation of critical, equitable and powerful innovations in curriculum and teacher education.

At present in the US, UK and Canada the great debate over literacy continues. This past US National Education and Literacy Week has been marked by a series of forums, conferences, and media 'events' about the reform of public education. It would appear that nearly a decade since *A Nation at Risk* initiated the discourse of reform via 'educational excellence', the alleged signs of educational decline continue apace: falling SAT scores, continued low achievement among minority students, declining enrolments in university science courses, a litany of employer complaints and so forth.

Across English-speaking nation states the debate has been refocused on teachers and teacher education. There is a good deal of talk here of the need to revalue teaching as a profession, of increased pay, of more professional autonomy and collegiality, and of the ways in which centralised school administration and test-based accountability have deterred not just innovation but also effective teaching which responded to students' and communities' interests, aspirations and achievements. There is much to this. It signals that many US commentators and analysts are awakening to the fact that Reagan-era moves towards more 'control' of teachers (e.g. teacher renewal and promotion via test results yielded, state funding via standardised test results, mandatory teacher-competency testing, centralised administrative and legislative control over schools) have not made any kind of substantial difference. Testing and centralisation advocates were notably silent in this week's forums, which stressed cases of successful progressive classroom innovation and community-based school reform models.

All sides, then, seem to coalesce around the notion that teachers' work and working conditions need to be revalued and reevaluated. This could be conducive to the very dangerous tendency to shunt responsibility for systemic social problems onto teachers, administrators and, ultimately, students. But it also has the potential for moving the debate away from a search for instructional and assessment technologies with magical effects. As Patrick Shannon's (1989) analysis of basal and whole language approaches in the US argues, attempts to 'fine tune' instructional technologies - even in very human directions - are doomed without a reappraisal of centralised control and standardisation of teachers' work, actual teaching and learning conditions in schools, disenfranchisement of parents from their children's educations, curricula which ignore community and cultural change, authoritarian school administrations that have not involved teachers in curriculum and school planning, and the need for teacher organisation and professional development stemming from within staffrooms and professional organisations. Even in America, where governmental and public teacher-bashing has become an art form, there is an emergent consensus on the need for teachers to receive substantially better wages, stronger roles in school-level decision-making, greater classroom and curricular autonomy, and significantly more community support via parental involvement.

These contrasting perspectives have only reaffirmed my sense that we in Queensland are in a relatively advantageous position. Despite the ostensible similarity of themes and issues, our professional and political situation is distinct and, in many ways, considerably more encouraging of constructive interventions in policy and practice. In particular, teacher education programs in Australia remain more critical in foundational orientation, innovative in pedagogical slant than their counterparts in the US - this in spite of a realistic recognition of our shortcomings in pedagogy and research, post-amalgamation confusion and other problems. The state P-12 curriculum program in language and literacy is far more critically-based and challenging than its UK and US counterparts, many of which still offer lock-step sequences for mandatory 'skill acquisition', testing and basal readers.

If, however, we fritter that opportunity away, and with global energy-related recession there is a further strong public 'reaction' towards expenditure on public sector activities like schooling, we could regress to 'back to the basics' (or the 'classics') rhetoric, standardised testing movements, and retrograde curriculum and policy moves, which in the last decade of US and UK schooling have not achieved their promised goals of 'the basics' or 'excellence'. Their effect instead has been the perpetuation of an economically utilitarian literacy for an elite, the continuing educational and economic disenfranchisement of children from lower middle and working classes and minority groups, and, relatedly, the discouragement and loss of many dedicated teachers from the profession.

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NO SINGLE MEASURE: DIFFERENT LITERACIES FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES? SHOULDN'T WE BE LETTING TEACHERS KNOW?

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Joseph Lo Bianco in the foreword to *No Single Measure*, the report of the first national survey of Australian adult literacy, argues that there have recently been three major changes in the way we talk about the literacy difficulties of the adult population.

The first, he says, is a shift from naming the problem in an individualist-welfare way which effectively marginalised the issue, to talking about the economic cost of low literacy, to seeing low literacy as a constraint to economic restructuring and development. 'Talking about literacy this way' he says, 'though it affects the same people in the same ways, has assisted in changing our perception.'

The second change has been the felt need for a more detailed and sophisticated data base, and of course, the survey was one response to that need. Adult Literacy Action Campaign (ALAC) and International Literacy Year funds have enabled more research and analysis to take place, but much more of it, like this study, raises many more questions than it can answer. And there is no guarantee of continuing support for research.

The third change Lo Bianco refers to is that there is now a greater clarity about how 'context-dependent' literacy needs and literacy measures are. He says, 'we now take it for granted that literacy is relative to the demands on individuals by their particular environments, that literacy is, as stated in the study, the application of specific skills, for specific purposes in specific contexts' (Wickert, 1990).

Joe Lo Bianco is never one to waste a political opportunity, and although I agree with him that these major shifts do appear to be occurring, he was (and rightly) concerned as much with agenda setting as with recording the extent of these changes. What is interesting is that these moves seem to be occurring more rapidly among policy-makers, bureaucrats/managers and media commentators, those outside the classroom, than among adult literacy practitioners themselves.

There is not time in this brief talk to do more than highlight some of the findings of the survey and ask you to consider some of the implications of these for teacher training. Before exploring this however, it is important to give you some idea of the conceptual basis which was based on a breakthrough study, *Literacy: Profiles of America's Young Adults* carried out for the United States' Educational Testing Service by Irwin Kirsch and Ann Jungeblut (1986).

That study was significant because it tackled head on the questions raised by the arbitrariness of most estimates of 'funtional illiteracy'. What does 10, 15, 20 per cent illiterate mean? What does a unidimensional test of literacy really measure other than the ability to do that test, or any test for that matter? How can it be said that the 10 - 15 - x per cent who were below the cut-off point determined for the study in question were illiterate and those who were perhaps only one or two points above this were not? Does any of this information tell us about what proportion of the population can actually do what? What kinds of literacy demands were being made of the respondents?

Consideration of these questions shows that it is really not possible to speak of literate and illiterate persons as two distinct categories. What was needed was another way of:

(a) describing the variations of literacy ability of the adult population; and

(b) exploring what this means.

The definition of literacy developed by the ETC study was:

> 'using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential'.

This relative concept views literacy as the effective application of specific skills - complex information processing skills - used with different materials for different purposes in different contexts and not as an isolated set of reading, writing and mathematics skills. Literacy is a functional skill, and 'in this sense, the phrase "functional literacy" is redundant in that literacy is by definition a functional ability' (Venesky, Kaestle & Sum, 1987).

Clearly then, literacy cannot be captured by a single point on a single scale. In this study, not only was there an explicit commitment to the view that literacy is not an all or nothing characteristic, that an individual either has it or doesn't, it also explored the very interesting idea that people have and use a number of different kinds of literacies for different purposes.

Tasks were designed to assess respondents' competence in recognising, acquiring, organising, interpreting and applying information that involves the use of different types of printed materials.

As a result of this process, a large number of tasks were developed. A major part of the American study was then to see if the responses to these tasks supported the hypothesis that there are different literacies - that literacy is multi-dimensional. Three distinct clusters emerged and these were termed:

Prose Literacy - the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts that include editorial, news, stories, poems and the like.

Document Literacy - the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in job applications or payslips, bus schedules, maps, indexes and so forth.

Quantitative Literacy - the knowledge and skills needed to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, that are embedded in print materials, such as balancing a cheque book, figuring out a tip, completing an order form or determining the amount of interest from a loan advertisement (Kirsch & Jungeblut, 1986).

The researchers then set out to analyse, on the basis of responses, what it was about a task that made it harder. To take the document items as an example, the tasks appear to get harder as:

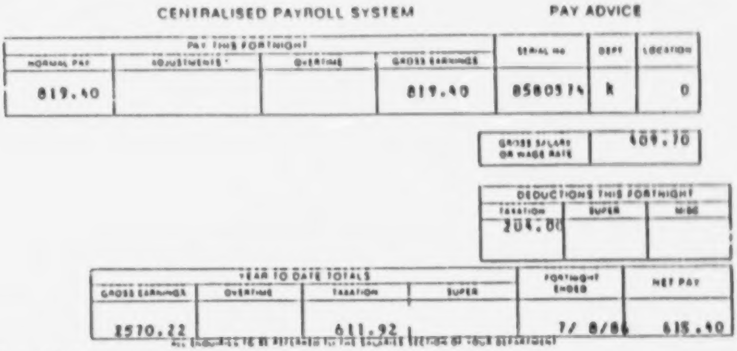
- the number of features or categories of information the reader has to locate in the document increases;
- the number of categories of information in the document that can serve as distractors or plausible right answers increases;
- the extent to which the information asked for in the question has less obvious identity with the information stated in the document.

As I said, I do not intend to present any detail of the results of this survey today; these have been widely reported elsewhere. I just want to make reference to three results as they each illustrate a different aspect of the literacy dilemma. The first relates to the pay slip item which illustrates what is meant by the 'existence of distractors', mentioned above. The question asked the respondent to identify the gross pay for the year to date. Twenty three per cent of the sample were unable to do this. The existence of 'distractors' or 'plausible right answers' in the word 'gross' appearing three times may provide a partial explanation for this poor performance.

QUESTION (written): **Here is your fortnightly pay slip. What is your gross pay for the year to date?**

Intermediate/ Adept Level

- ▶ 84% of those who attempted were right
- ▶ 77% of the whole sample were right



CENTRALISED PAYROLL SYSTEM

PAY ADVICE

PAY THIS FORTNIGHT				SERIAL NO	DEPT	LOCATION
NORMAL PAY	ADJUSTMENTS	OVERTIME	GROSS EARNINGS			
819.40			819.40	8580374	k	0

GROSS SALARY OR WAGE RATE	409.70

DEDUCTIONS THIS FORTNIGHT		
TAXATION	SUPER	MISC
204.00		

YEAR TO DATE TOTALS				FORTNIGHT ENDED	NET PAY
GROSS EARNINGS	OVERTIME	TAXATION	SUPER		
1570.22		611.92		7/ 8/86	615.40

Reduced from original

The second point relates to the so-called 'technology article'. This was an editorial-type newspaper article about the implications of freezing embryos if the donors are accidentally killed. The respondents were asked to read the article and the interviewer asked for a verbal response to a question about the issues of such a situation. The answers were recorded verbatim. Even with a fairly generous interpretation of the responses, only 27 per cent of the sample were scored correct. There is clearly a need to establish whether this result is an accurate reflection of the critical reading abilities of Australian adults.

The third point relates to the performance on the items measuring quantitative literacy. The table shows how poor the performance was. Ten per cent of the sample failed to get any items correct.

Percentage of people correct of those who attempted items on the quantitative dimension

ITEM	% CORRECT
MENU - 10% EXTRA	51
AIRLINE SCHEDULE - BRISBANE TRAVELLER	56
AIRLINE SCHEDULE - SYDNEY TRAVELLER	62
ACCOUNT RECORD	63
MENU - CHANGE	69
DEPOSIT SLIP - TOTAL	84

The study them attempted to identify, by use of regression analysis techniques, what variables were associated with lower literacy abilities. The following factors were identified:

. level of education
. age
. the presence of reading materials in the childhood home
. the presence of English in the childhood home
. the amount of current reading practice.

Although the amount of variation in performance explained by these variables was far too small to claim that any have much predictive value in themselves, what they do is show that, contrary to widely held opinion, being non-English speaking born is insufficient as an explanation for Australia's literacy difficulties. There is as much variation in ability among the English speaking born as the non-English speaking born.

However the single most important factor related to literacy proficiency was the amount of reading people do now, particularly the number of 'documents' they read regularly. This may seem little more than a truism, but it has important implications.

If the amount of different types of material that people read is the best predictor of literacy proficiency on all three dimensions, and if the number of reading materials in the childhood home is also related to literacy success, then there seem to be at least two clear messages:

1. parents and other community members have a vital role to play in promoting literacy acquisition, and

2. the maintenance of literacy would seem to be related to the continued active use of literacy in context.

What is significant about the finding that it is document literacy is that most documents require some action and some engagement. Document literacy is active literacy. Literacy is context dependent.

Do adults think reading and writing is important? Eleven per cent of the sample had not read or looked at any kind of book in the previous six months. Twenty-four per cent had not written anything other than a list in the previous six months. Ten per cent could not recall any books in the childhood home.

When asked if they needed reading skills in their work, 23 per cent said they did not; 30 per cent said they did not need writing skills. Thirty-four per cent of the sample said they had asked for help in reading information from government agencies in the previous six months; 10 per cent had asked for help with Medicare claim forms.

Perhaps the most important consequence of the results of this survey is that it has shaken us out of complacency. I suspect that the results, surprising as they may have been, were not surprising to adult literacy practitioners. But now that there is the greater awareness that Joe Lo Bianco referred to, we are, I suspect, increasingly to be called to account - and none too soon.

The marginalisation of adult literacy over the first 15 years of its recognition has meant serious underfunding which, I believe, is about to backfire seriously on us. Until the ALAC money, there was no money available for research into adult literacy, thus no data base.

The lack of funding meant that there was little call to be accountable - so there are virtually no means to indicate success or failure of programs. Most States have relied heavily on the use of volunteers, consistent with the welfarist perspective, and so there have been no expectations that our field of practice be supported by strong theoretical foundations applied by knowledgeable practitioners. This is, of course, the kind of situation that results in a senior bureaucrat in one State repeatedly throwing the challenge 'Show me an adult who has learned to read in a literacy program'.

The well-intentioned will fund campaigns and gain media attention - with stories of 'victims' (who do not in fact represent the great majority with literacy difficulties) and with an insufficient understanding of the breadth and nature of literacy problems. These campaigns attract potential volunteers and students - but not the funds for increased provision and for training and staff development.

Politicians will use results from surveys like this to beat their own particular drum - and of course, in doing so, demonstrate their lack of understanding of the nature of language and literacy development. And in the absence of informed advice rhetoric will take its place.

There is absolutely no question that adult literacy will have to lift its game as it moves from the 'margin to centre-stage' (Black, 1990). Adults have a right to know what literacy skills they possess and what they lack. They have a right to know what progress they're making. They have a right to be taught by experienced, trained practitioners who know what they are doing, who have a language to talk about it, who have a theory of language underpinning their work and who understand the connections between language and culture. No longer is intuition sufficient. No longer is the application of the watered down version of the 'quick-fix', the technical-rational solution, sufficient.

There are hardly any opportunities in Australia for teachers of adults to gain training which will enable them to assist adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties. Recommendations from gatherings such as these will do a great deal to bring this appalling situation to the attention of decision-makers. This need extends beyond literacy and numeracy teachers and tutors to all teachers and trainers likely to be working with adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties. I will finish with one anecdote to illustrate the significance of this. It concerns a situation described to me by a colleague. She teaches an elective (note: *an elective*) to TAFE trade teachers undertaking their teacher training. The elective is called Language and Literacy. As she enlightened them about the nature of language, about the interaction between the reader and the text, about how to promote reading among their students, these teachers became more and more angry. 'Why don't we know about this? How come I am learning about this for the first time in my life?' Why indeed?

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LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE OF TERTIARY STUDENTS

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My brief for this conference is quite specific. I am to tell you what I know about the language performance of tertiary students. My position should be clear from the beginning: I do not believe university students in Australia in 1990 are illiterate. This is an opinion, an informed opinion, but opinion nevertheless. I must confess right here and now that what empirical data I have is very limited. I am not able to give you a definitive statement about how many of our students in higher education have severely restricted skills or how many possess better than adequate skills. What's more, what I have to report to you is mostly information about student writing, not about the whole range of literacy skills.

With those caveats, let me proceed.

There are many arguments about whether standards are declining in the schools. Although I must admit that some interpret data from mass testing in the USA to show an increasing problem, Applebee et al. (1987) find no evidence of falling standards. Similarly, in several States of Australia attempts are being made to collect data on basic literacy and numeracy in the schools. Again, there is no evidence of declining standards, according to expert analysts of the data (McGaw et al., 1989; Bourke et al., 1981).

Perhaps more to the point for teachers in higher education are some attempts to assess the language skills of college and university students. At the University of Adelaide, the English Skills Assessment Test (ESA), which was developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research using American tests as a base, was given to almost 1,000 first-year students. Only 16 per cent of students failed to meet a standard nominated as acceptable by staff of the University (Meyler, 1988), and theirs was a very high standard.

At the South Australian College of Advanced Education, a different procedure was used to evaluate language skills of teacher education students. Early in first semester, students were asked to read an article in their own time and were then given 30 minutes of class time to answer a question about the article; the test procedure was repeated later in the first year. Marking criteria were negotiated and markers were asked to assess two orders of skills: (1) Basic literacy skills - grammatical sentences, correct spelling, cohesive paragraphs, and correct punctuation; and (2) Academic literacy skills - clear understanding of the article, clear reasoning, and balanced structure.

Of a total group of 148, on the second test, 78 per cent achieved a 'high' standard on the basic literacy component, and 57 per cent achieved a 'high' standard on the academic literacy component. Only 1 per cent and 5 per cent were rated 'low' on the two components respectively (Brock, 1989).

Researchers at the University of Newcastle are combining testing procedures and considering both objective test data from the ESA and results of evaluation of samples of writing. The ESA tests spelling, punctuation and capitalisation, comprehension of a long passage, paragraph comprehension, usage, vocabulary, sentence structure and logical relationships. Holbrook and Bourke (1989) report that 'Overall, students answered approximately 80 per cent of the ESA items correctly. The strongest area was comprehension of short paragraphs, with 91 per cent of the items being correctly answered. The weakest areas were comprehension of long paragraphs (70 per cent correct) and punctuation and capitalisation (72 per cent).' The researchers were, however, convinced that the test was not the best which could be developed for tertiary students.

When these researchers tabulated errors in essays written by Diploma in Education students, they found little consistency between the two measures of language skills, even where the categories of error were similar for the ESA and the writing task checklist. The median total number of errors per 1,000 words was 21, with a median of 10 errors in the category of punctuation. Impressionistic and holistic judgments about paragraph construction and about the unity and sequence of the whole essay were also made. 'The wholistic measures had little relationship with spelling, punctuation and capitalisation, usage or vocabulary but were significantly related to the number of errors made in sentence structure ...'.

Finally, Australian researchers conducted an extremely detailed error analysis of papers produced in a British History subject at an Australian university in 1974 and in the same subject in 1984 (Taylor, West & Nightingale, 1987). They report no significant differences between year groups, but found a slight trend favouring the 1984 students.

The mean error frequencies per 1,000 words reported in this study were much higher than those reported in the Holbrook and Bourke data - 57 for the 1974 group and 51.5 for the 1984 group. However, this analysis attempted to be comprehensive in its identification of error, assigning every error to one of 122 categories, and requiring the markers to count as an error some elements which are subject to decisions based on personal taste. It seems that there is no possible way to compare the data from the Newcastle study with that from the history essay study, when it is seen that the system of categorisation in the latter resulted in identifying a median of 13 errors in the use of commas around adverbials alone, while in the former there was only a median of 10 errors in all types of punctuation combined.

Taylor, West and Nightingale reproduce two pages from an 'average' essay with all of the errors identified to demonstrate that although their stringent scoring system produces results which might suggest 'illiteracy' of the sort constantly bemoaned in the press, the essay itself is far from illiterate. For the most part, the writing flows reasonably well. The material is adequately organised and the meaning is clear apart from two uses of 'it'. The sentence structures are mature, varied and almost always grammatical. The vocabulary is not rich and tends toward the colloquial but it is adequate and generally accurate. There are two errors of morphology and one of spelling. This is not 'illiterate' writing.

In this summary of just a few of the attempts to assess the extent and nature of the problem with student writing, we begin to see some of the difficulties. Among other things, there is really no agreement about what it is we are trying to assess or about how we should be assessing it. Nevertheless, a good many conscientious attempts are reaching the conclusion that tertiary students rarely lack basic language skills.

In the history essay project, what we were much more interested in was whether there were patterns of error which distinguished between the good writers and the poorer writers. We reasoned that if there were, we and other teachers and study skills advisers might have some guidance about where to put our efforts when we tried to help students who struggle to write better. We found that what distinguished between skilled writers and the others were not the errors usually emphasised in calls for back to the basics, nor the errors usually emphasised in traditional drills. Spelling, subject-verb agreement, even tense sequence were not the important discriminators. Certain types of punctuation do discriminate. So do the use of vocabulary and the combination of words into meaningful statements in clauses, and the structure of complex sentences and the noun phrase.

These are the types of error which are very much tied up with a student's ability to sort out what he or she is trying to say and to communicate it clearly. Let me give you just a simple example. I said the use of vocabulary - choosing the wrong word - was much more of a problem for the bottom group of students. We observed malapropisms and wrong derivatives of word stems and incorrect collocations - and often it seemed that the student was struggling to express a complex notion and this slippery concept did not quite get captured by the words.

That's what I mean when I say that the errors are linked to attempts to constitute meaning.

There are a few other observations we made that I would like to share with you.

First, there is a disconcerting lack of consistency in the errors students make. Even our most error-prone student with regard to subject-verb agreement only made eight errors in 2,000 words. What can be the meaning of this? The student knows the rule sometimes? Surely if the student got it right so much of the time, there is some sense in which even this student with a problem about subject-verb agreement knows the rule.

Second, the most troublesome categories of error are those most subject to personal taste. Some of us use a lot of commas, some of us punctuate fairly lightly. For instance, is a comma required after a four-word phrase at the beginning of a sentence? We instructed our markers to use the most conservative version of such rules, but in truth, many of the 'errors' would only be counted as an error by the most pedantic.

Third, error-free writing may still be poor writing. We had a couple of students who wrote 'correctly' but their 'history' was so simplistic as to be quite fatuous.

Fourth, some errors are totally dependent on the context; for instance, capitalisation which accounted for many errors in these history essays which were dealing with various unions and strikes, etc. Which initial letters in the phrase 'the great London dock strike' should be capitalised? The answer is really dependent on historians' conventions in writing about that particular event.

The point I am trying to make is that it is extremely difficult to say what exactly is needed to help with tertiary students' writing. I do not believe that objective testing of whether students can identify and correct errors really will tell us whether any individual can write well. We found that even looking at text they wrote themselves did not necessarily prove that Bloggs needed work on one thing and Jones on another.

Complicated things happen, things we really do not fully understand, but which all teachers need to be aware of. The best evidence of these complications in student writing is found in the texts students produce. People who assist students with writing - study skills counsellors - have observed that a student may write quite acceptably in one subject and very badly in another. The problem manifests itself in surface errors, things like poor sentence structures or incorrect choice or use of words, to the extent that one sometimes wonders if the two texts could possibly have been written by the same person. Even more perplexing are the cases where a student writes with apparently differing levels of skill in sections of the same essay. And really worrying are the cases where a student has been quite successful in first year writing tasks and then writes badly in second or third year.

Taylor et al. (1988) describe some of these cases and put forward the thesis that these breakdowns in language at the mechanical level are associated with attempts to express ideas which are not fully controlled by the student. That is, to over-simplify, the student does not 'know' enough to write well about the topic. It may be that the student has not learned to use the specialist language of a particular discipline, and - like a young child trying to use a new word and not quite getting it in the right context - the tertiary student errs by using a term in its popular usage rather than its specialist meaning. Or specialist words are combined in ways that are correct grammatically but incorrect in the discipline's usage. These are errors that are very difficult for anyone but a discipline specialist to explain adequately to the confused student.

But there is something more difficult to explain about ways in which students do not 'know enough' to write correctly. It is obvious that one cannot write a well-structured and well-argued essay if one lacks information or understanding, but often students have information - tons of it. They seem to have failed to synthesise it, and they write essays that go round in circles, lacking focus and frequently exhibiting an alarming level of mechanical error. What we and they do not understand about these texts is that they may be an intermediate step between ignorance and comprehension.

Many professional writers say things like, 'How do I know what I think, I haven't written it yet?' They recognise that writing is itself a tool for thinking and learning. More profoundly, linguists and theorists about language say, 'Thought is born through words' (Vygotsky, 1962). Martin (1980) describes a model of language that 'treats meaning not as a "thing" but as CHOICE. Language is being treated here as a system that makes meanings (not as a system that turns meaning or thinking into sound)' (p. 6). Martin reminds us that language is more than the system of orthographic symbols on a page, that the thoughts and the language are not separate. Many teachers and most students have not realised the implications of that insight. They focus on the product of the act of writing and ignore the processes through which good work is produced.

Let me return to what researchers have observed in student writing. The study which compared 1974 and 1984 essays also sought to identify patterns of error which discriminated between the more and less successful writers in the two groups. The errors which were typical of poorer writers' work were those which were associated with the constitution of meaning (Taylor & Nightingale, 1990; Taylor, West & Nightingale, 1987). A simple example is that punctuation is the best discriminator between skilled writers and the less skilled. How might this result be interpreted? Punctuation, say H.W. and F.G. Fowler in *The King's English* (1931, 234) is concerned with meaning: in particular, 'Stops are not to alter the meaning, but merely to show it up'. The meaning must be sought first and the stops added to point it up. So the process of producing good writing must be understood to include discovery of what one really means to say, or coming to grips with one's content.

This interconnection between the surface correctness of the writing and the writers' control of meaning helps explain why we found that disconcerting lack of consistency in individual history students' abilities to apply even relatively simple grammatical principles. All of this is not to say there's no need to give serious thought to language development in teacher education programs - both preservice and inservice. But we do need to be sure we're attacking the right problem at the right level. I think we can aim much higher than the types of 'remedial' activities which are usually recommended, and I am positive that we must involve all disciplines in the institution.

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WHAT OUGHT TEACHERS TO KNOW ABOUT ENGLISH GRAMMAR?

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The aim of this paper is to draw attention to a number of differences between modern linguistics and traditional grammar in their treatment of English grammar. It stems from a study I made of 41 primary and secondary level school textbooks published in Australia and appearing, either originally or in a subsequent edition or printing, during the period 1979-1987[1]. It is clear that traditional grammar still provides the main model for textbook writers; sadly, most of the texts studied displayed no awareness of advances in our understanding of language that have been made within the framework of modern linguistics within the last half-century and more. I have certainly no wish to suggest that school grammar should be based on any of the various more or less formalised models of grammar that are the subject of debate in contemporary linguistic theory: much current analysis is far too abstract, theory-bound and controversial to provide the source for school materials. I do want to argue, however, that by following certain very basic principles of modern linguistics in general we can make major improvements to the presentation of English grammar without departing too radically from traditional grammar.

The paper is organised around the familiar distinction between descriptive grammar and prescriptive grammar: in #1 we shall be concerned with principles of linguistic analysis, in #2 with the concept of grammatical correctness.

1. Descriptive Grammar

Two areas in the descriptive field where improvements are needed concern the questions of how we should explicate our grammatical categories and how we should decide which categories are appropriate for English.

1.1 Definitions and explanations of grammatical categories

The following are typical of the traditional schoolbook definitions of grammatical categories: 'The subject is the person or thing spoken about', 'the subject is the performer of the action expressed by the verb', 'tense means time', 'an imperative clause is one that expresses a command or request', 'the possessive case shows ownership', 'a noun is the name of a person, animal, place or thing', 'a verb expresses action or state'. These are what are known as 'notional definitions', i.e. definitions based on the meanings of the words or larger expressions being analysed. Thus in applying some of these definitions to the analysis of an elementary example like

(1) *The dog barked*

We need to ask about the meaning of the sentence and its Parts: *dog* is a noun because it denotes an animal, *barked* is a verb because it expresses an action, its tense is past because we are talking of past time, and so on. Although definitions like these are found in schoolbook after schoolbook, and have been for generation after generation, they cannot sustain serious examination. Once we go beyond the most elementary examples we quickly find that they lead to innumerable wrong or indeterminate results.

I will illustrate this point by reference to three categories: subject, tense and imperative clause. Consider first such examples as

(2) (i) *Nobody liked him*

(ii) *Something is wrong with the switch*

The subject is *nobody* in (i) and *something* in (ii), but neither of these satisfies either of the definitions quoted above for subject: (i) would typically be used to say something about whoever *him* refers to, not about 'nobody', and similarly (ii) tells us something about the switch, not about 'something'. And neither (i) nor (ii) expresses an action (liking, for example, is a psychological or emotional state, not an action), and hence there is no element satisfying the definition 'performer of the action'.

Consider next how the schoolbook equation of tense and time fares with examples like

(3) (i) *The match will start tomorrow*

(ii) *The match starts tomorrow*

(iii) [*I didn't know*] *the match started tomorrow*

(4) (i) *He lived in College last year*

(ii) [*She told me*] he now lived in College

(iii) [*Things would be easier*] *if he lived in College next year*

In (3) the time of starting is future in all three, yet the tense is respectively future, present and past;[2] in (4) the tense of the verb *lived* is past in all three, yet the time of his living in College is respectively past, present and future. Clearly tense is not at all the same thing as time: the relation between them is highly complex, not one-to-one.

A third example is provided by

(5) (i) *Passengers are requested to remain seated*

(ii) *Would you mind opening the door*

(iii) *Sleep well*

Here (i) and (ii) satisfy the definition quoted above for imperative clause but (iii) does not (it would normally be used to express a wish, not a command or request), yet (iii) is the only one that is an imperative clause: (i) is declarative and (ii) interrogative.

Similar counterexamples can be found for other notional definitions. Definitions of this kind simply will not work: they assume a one-to-one relation between categories of meaning and categories of grammatical form, whereas the actual relation between them is typically quite complex.

By contrast with this traditional approach, modern grammar draws a fundamental distinction between two levels of definition: the **language-particular** level and the **general** level. Categories such as subject, tense, imperative, noun, verb, possessive case and so on are obviously not unique to English but figure in the grammars of many languages: they are 'general categories'. A language-particular definition of a certain category gives the distinctive grammatical properties of that category in the language under investigation, in our case English: it provides criteria for deciding which expressions in the language belong to that category. A general definition, by contrast, provides a principled basis for using the same categories in the grammars of different languages: it gives criteria for deciding whether a general term/label is applicable to a category whose

membership in the language under investigation is determined by the language-particular definition.

Let us illustrate this two-level approach with reference to the category of imperative clause, beginning with the language-particular level. On one dimension English clauses belong to one or other of a number of structural types exemplified in

(6) (i) *You are very careful*

(ii) *How careful you are!*

(iii) *Are you very careful?*

(iv) *Be very careful!*

The type shown in (iv) is distinguished from the others by a number of grammatical properties, of which the most salient are: (a) the verb is in the 'base' form (thus *be* here, as opposed to present tense *are*); (b) a second person subject is omissible (thus we can have *You be very careful* or, more often, as in (iv), *Be very careful*, but in (i)-(iii) the *you* is grammatically obligatory). The set of distinctive grammatical properties constitutes a definition which will enable us to determine whether or not some arbitrary clause in English belongs in the same grammatical category as (6iv). (5iii) satisfies this definition, for example, but (5i) and (5ii) do not. Similarly in

(7) (i) *Somebody opens the door*

(ii) *Somebody open the door*

the definition is satisfied by (ii) but not (i), since (i) has a present tense verb, (ii) a base form verb.

Turning now to the general level, we define 'imperative clause' as a grammatically distinct clause class whose members are characteristically used as directives. ('Directive' is a cover term subsuming command, request, instruction and various other kinds of speech act whose primary point is to get the addressee to do something.) Most, probably all, languages have a distinct clause construction associated with the issuing of directives, and this construction we call imperative. Notice that the definition is formulated in terms of the **characteristic** use of members of the category: this caters for the fact that although the grammatical category has a semantic basis it does not stand in a one-to-one relation with any semantic category. Most clauses in English which have the same structural properties as (6iv) are typically used as directives, and hence this category satisfies the general definition of imperative clause. The fact that (5iii) would not normally be used as a directive is not a problem for this approach: it is assigned to the same category as (6iv) because its grammatical structure satisfies the language-particular definition. Nor is the fact that (5i) and (5ii) would normally be used as directives a problem: they fail to meet the grammatical criteria for membership of the imperative category. Thus priority is given to grammatical criteria, for we are dealing with grammatical categories. Reference to meaning comes in at the second stage, when we are selecting an appropriate general term for a category whose members satisfy the language-particular grammatical definition.

The traditional notional definitions, suitably adapted, can for the most part form the basis for general definitions, but they are completely inadequate at the language-particular level. And there can be no doubt that they are presented in the school textbooks as though they applied at that level, i.e. as though they enabled the student to apply them to the analysis of English sentences.

1.2 What categories do we need in the grammar of English?

A second difference between the traditional and modern approaches concerns the selection of grammatical categories used in the description of English. Because of its failure to distinguish clearly between the language-particular level and the general level, traditional grammar foists onto English a number of categories that are perfectly valid for Latin but are inappropriate for English. Modern grammar, by contrast, insists that categories proposed for English should be justified by grammatical distinctions within English. General definitions all incorporate a condition of grammatical distinctiveness, as in the one proposed above for imperative clause ('a grammatically distinct clause whose members ...').

Let me explain this concept by means of an obvious example. All the clauses in

(8) (i) *Would you like another sherry?*

(ii) *May I pour you another sherry?*

(iii) *Have another sherry*

(iv) *Let me pour you another sherry*

(v) *There's some more sherry here if you'd like some*

would typically be used to express an offer, but we do not assign them to a special category of ‘offeratives’ because there is no distinct grammatical construction associated with offers. We interpret them as offers by virtue of their **lexical** content (*another/more sherry, like/pour, have*), rather than any particular grammatical property: (i) and (ii) are interrogatives like (5ii) and (6iii), (iii) and (iv) are imperatives, and (v) is declarative like (5i) and (6i).

This is quite uncontroversial: traditional grammar does not propose a category of offeratives for English (no doubt because there is no such category in Latin). But the principle illustrated here can be applied elsewhere to eliminate some categories that we do find in traditional school grammar. As an example, consider the category of case. In Latin, nouns inflect for case, with nominative *Brutus* and *Caesar* contrasting with accusative *Brutum* and *Caesarem*, and so on. (Latin has six cases, but I will focus here on just these two.) The choice between nominative and accusative is determined by the function of the noun in the structure of the clause: normally, subject function selects nominative, direct object function selects accusative, as illustrated in

(9)	FUNCTION		CASE	
	Brutus	**Caesar**	**Brutus**	**Caesar**
(i) *Brutus Caesarem necavit* (‘Brutus killed Caesar’)	Subject	Object	Nominative	Accusative
(ii) *Caesar Brutum necavit* (‘Caesar killed Brutus’)	Object	Subject	Accusative	Nominative

(The bold face headings ***Brutus*** and ***Caesar*** represent the nouns considered as vocabulary items in abstraction from their inflection: we say that *Brutum* is the accusative form of ***Brutus***, and so on.) Now it is important to distinguish clearly between functions (such as subject and object) and cases (such as nominative and accusative). Function is a matter of the relation between one element in a construction and another (we might say that in (9i) *Caesarem* is object of the verb *necavit*); case is a matter of the inflectional form of a vocabulary item. We must distinguish between the two kinds of concept because the relation between them is by no means one-to-one. This is evident from the following English examples (where the analysis on the right applies to the unbracketed pronoun):

(10)	FUNCTION	CASE
(i) He [*went alone*]	Subject	Nominative
(ii) [*For*] him [*to go alone was unwise*]	Subject	Accusative
(iii) [*It is*] I [*who am to blame*]	Complement	Nominative
(iv) [*It is*] me [*who is to blame*]	Complement	Nominative

In infinitival subordinate clauses the subject appears in the accusative case, as illustrated in (10ii), while (iii) and (iv) show that the (predicative) complement function allows either a nominative pronoun such as *I* or an accusative pronoun such as *me*, depending on whether the style is relatively formal or informal.

Once this distinction is clearly recognised, it becomes apparent that the categories of nominative and accusative case are irrelevant to ordinary nouns in English. In the following examples the function of *Kim* changes but the form remains *Kim* throughout:

(11)	FUNCTION OF *KIM*
(i) *Kim won the race*	Subject
(ii) *The intruder shot Kim*	Object
(iii) *The one I liked best was kim*	Complement

What signals the difference in function between the *Kim* of (i) and that of (ii) is not the case but linear position. English here differs sharply from Latin: in Latin the functions are signalled by case and hence the order of elements is much freer than in English, so that *Caesarem Brutus necavit* has the same meaning as (9i), not (9ii). To say that *Kim* is nominative in (11i) and accusative in (11ii) is to analyse English as though it were Latin, but quite a number of the schoolbooks do just this - and one even finds sometimes a dative case postulated for the indirect object *Kim* in examples like *They gave Kim the book*. English has a great deal less inflection than Latin: we get a better and simpler analysis if we accept for English only those inflectional categories that are justified by our principle of distinctiveness. By this criterion, *Kim* in all the above examples will simply be in the neutral case, opposed solely to possessive *Kim's*. The example given relates to noun inflection, but the same applies even more to verb inflection: a modern grammar of English has no place for such categories as present subjunctive, let alone a distinction between 1st person singular present subjunctive, 2nd person singular present subjunctive, etc. (for detailed argument, see Huddleston, 1989: 18-19).

2. Prescriptive Grammar

Descriptive grammar and prescriptive grammar differ in their goals. There is no necessary conflict between them, but descriptive grammar must provide the empirical basis for sound prescriptive grammar. It is for this reason that although modern linguistics is a descriptive rather than prescriptive discipline, it is nevertheless highly relevant to an evaluation of current practices in prescriptive grammar. The prescriptive content of the texts surveyed generally reflects what from this respect may be regarded as unenlightened prescriptivism, and I would like in this section to suggest three respects in which it could be improved.

2.1 The need to allow for different varieties within Standard English

An English course must surely aim to heighten the student's sensitivity to the language, and a major component of this must be an awareness that it covers a range of different varieties, standard versus non-standard, formal versus informal, written versus spoken, and so on. With few exceptions, however, the texts operate with a simple contrast between correct and incorrect, with correct grammar restricted to what would be appropriate in the formal written variety of Standard English. For example, the following are all presented in Howard (1986) as mistakes in need of correction:

(12) (i) *He didn't do nothing*

(ii) [*Who is knocking?* -] *It is me*

(iii) *My father is stronger than me*

(iv) *I will be at your house at nine o'clock*

(v) *They were asked if they were ready*

In fact, of course, only (12i) is ungrammatical in Standard English.[3] (ii) and (iii) are perfectly acceptable in informal register: there is no justification for saying that accusative *me* should be corrected to nominative *I* here, and insistence on a nominative pronoun in such constructions can result in completely unnatural sentences like *The child in the game was I* or *The people in that photograph are we*, examples found elsewhere in the sample of texts. (iv) and (v) - where Howard wants *will* replaced by *shall* and *if* by *whether* - are not even restricted to informal register. It is surely quite unsatisfactory to group together such a disparate range of phenomena as we find in (i)-(v) in an undifferentiated category of mistakes: teachers and textbook writers need a more sophisticated concept of language variety.

2.2 The logical dependence of prescriptive grammar on descriptive grammar

Prescriptive rules can only be justified if they reflect descriptive ones, if they are based on actual usage. The texts surveyed, however, tended to be extremely conservative and to condemn a range of constructions that are now quite standard. A number of the rules they give are rejected or severely qualified in *The Oxford Guide to the English Language* (Weiner & Hawkins, 1984): it is difficult to see any justification for asking a schoolteacher to correct usage accepted by an authoritative work of this kind. For example, some texts insist on a singular verb with *none* (*None of the birds shows* - not *show* - *much fear in our presence*), whereas Weiner and Hawkins recognise that either singular or plural is acceptable, with the plural more common. Some texts even proscribe plural verbs after collective nouns, treating such examples as *The jury have been deliberating for several hours* as ungrammatical. One text goes so far as to require a singular verb after *a number of* (e.g. *A number of supporters works very hard*), which is just the reverse of the rule given in Weiner and Hawkins. Again, we find clause-final prepositions condemned in spite of the fact that, as Weiner and Hawkins observe, 'it is a natural feature of the English language that many sentences and clauses end with a preposition, and has been since the earliest times'. I should add that Weiner and

Hawkins (1984) is itself more conservative than some works, such as Quirk et al. (1985), the most authoritative, large-scale and up-to-date descriptive grammar of English. The latter, for example, recognises that *will* is very widely used in 1st person future use - as in (12iv) above - whereas Weiner and Hawkins (1984) regards it as not fully acceptable in formal register: a sensitive approach to prescriptive grammar should acknowledge such disagreement and variable usage instead of unthinkingly repeating traditional rules.

2.3 The distinction between rules of grammar and rules of style

The descriptive linguist draws a distinction between rules of grammar and rules of style. If a sentence violates a rule of grammar it is ungrammatical. *He didn't do nothing, He done it yesterday, She took Martin and I's share*, for example, are all ungrammatical in Standard English precisely because they do not conform to the rules of grammar. If a sentence violates a rule of style, however, it is not ungrammatical but rather stylistically unacceptable or infelicitous. An example of this type is:

(13) *The lady was wearing a hat on her head which was made of straw*

This is not ungrammatical, for the rules of grammar allow for a relative clause to be moved to the end of the main clause, away from its antecedent: (13) has essentially the same grammatical structure as *She gave something to the dog which made it ill*, where the antecedent of *which* is *something*. (13) is stylistically unacceptable because it is ambiguous, with the unintended interpretation (where *head* is the antecedent of *which*) more salient than the intended one.

That is not to suggest, of course, that the teacher should not correct (13). The significance of the distinction between the two types of rule lies in the nature of the explanation or justification that can validly be given for them. Prescriptive rules of style, distinguishing between 'good' and 'bad' writing (or speaking), can typically be justified on internal linguistic grounds; prescriptive rules of grammar, distinguishing between 'grammatical' and 'ungrammatical', typically cannot: they generally require a sociolinguistic justification.

We have already seen how the stylistic unacceptability of (13) can be explained by reference to the form and meaning of the sentence. But no comparable justification can be given for avoiding sentences like *He didn't* *do nothing*: there is no inherent deficiency here, simply a construction that is stigmatised in our society. An explanation of the rule must thus be sociolinguistic in nature, a matter of people's attitudes to language, of the distinction between standard and non-standard varieties. 'Unenlightened' prescriptivism, by contrast, handles this phenomenon in the same way as (13) - by arguing that the proscribed construction is inherently inferior to *He didn't do anything* because the two negatives cancel each other out so that the sentence really means the opposite of what was intended. This argument is completely invalid, for the rule that two negatives are logically equivalent to a positive applies to **logical form**, not **grammatical structure**. This is evident from the fact that adding a third grammatical negative, as in *He didn't do nothing to nobody*, makes no difference to the acceptability: if the logical equivalence rule applied to grammatical negatives, the three negatives here would reduce not to a positive but to a negative, so that the meaning would no longer be the opposite of what was intended. Notice, moreover, that in languages like French the standard variety has two grammatical negatives: *He didn't do anything* translates as *Il n'a rien fait*, where both *n'* and *rien* are grammatically negative. Indeed, elsewhere in English we find that the standard variety has a construction with two grammatical negatives that is logically negative, not positive: *He had neither the right qualifications nor the right friends* (with *neither* and *nor* grammatical negatives) is logically equivalent to *He didn't have either the right qualifications or the right friends* (where there is just a single grammatical negative, *n't*). The same general point applies to other features of non-standard English. *I done it*, for example, is not linguistically inferior to *I did it*: the great majority of verbs have identity of form between past tense and past participle in the standard variety (cf. *I found it* and *I have found it*, etc.), and the non-standard variety simply extends this 'syncretism' to a few more verbs.

It is important for teachers to be aware that such non-standard forms and constructions are not inherently deficient but simply different from those of the socially more prestigious standard. For it is only too easy to take the damaging step of regarding not only the non-standard language as inferior, but also the people who use it. It thus needs emphasising that the non-standard variety is just as rule-governed, just as internally consistent as the standard one.

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Notes

1. A list of these texts is included with the detailed critique presented in Huddleston (1989).

2. I accept here, for the sake of argument, the traditional analysis of *will start* as a future tense; there are good grounds for taking *will* as a modal auxiliary rather than a future tense auxiliary, but the point being made here is valid whichever analysis we adopt.

3. Ungrammatical, that is, with the sense 'He didn't do anything': I ignore the reading 'It is not the case that he didn't do anything', which would have contrastive emphasis on *nothing* in order to deny a previously uttered or implied *He did nothing*.

LANGUAGE PRACTICES AND RESISTANT READING AND WRITING

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In setting out a language framework for potential programs of study at the preservice and inservice levels, I want to do three things. First, drawing heavily on Giroux (1983), I'll provide a brief review of three characterisations of language, their particular ideological manifestations, and their associated views of literacy. Second, I will chart a path through the range of knowledge required by teachers if they are to understand the constructed nature of readers and writers, the relationship between text as ideology and text as structured language, contexts of text production and reception, genres as intersecting intertextual sites, and the inevitable inscribing of readers and writers in discourse communities. Finally, I will propose that the interests of both teachers and students will best be served if they can join in resistant literacy practices which challenge educational texts and the specific forms of gender, race and class positioning these texts sustain and valorise.

In recent times there has been a convergent tendency, in both linguistics and teacher education, to view social and cultural phenomena, rather than grammar or cognitive development, as the predominant factors in language growth and linguistic performance. What is still missing, however, in teacher education programs is any thoroughgoing awareness of how the teachers' *own* language relates to the ideological contexts in which they work, and a consequent awareness of the inseparability of language and social identity.

The importance of this focus on the social aspects of language has been reinforced in the wake of the dramatic increase in students from immigrant cultures. There is a related need for greater understanding about ethnic and socio-economic divisions and tensions more generally, as a result of the growing awareness of the relationships between socio-cultural background, oracy and literacy. In particular, the task is to convey to both students in training and to practising teachers how particular views of language construct particular kinds of literacy and therefore particular teaching practices. I think we can be a lot more specific about what these views of language are. A reasonable starting point is to group approaches to language under three general headings, each of which has held some sway, and led to some recognisable and persistent literacy practices. Any teacher education curriculum certainly needs to foreground these approaches and to indicate how their various manifestations have derived from, and been realised in historically explicit social, economic and political circumstances. The bare readings I offer here need to be fleshed out, and eventually read dialectically so that students can critique the assumptions on which they rest. Only then can they provide the framework for the type of reflexive critique of language practice to which Garth Boomer referred.

THREE APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE

1. Instrumental Approach

An instrumental view of language leads to a culture of positivism, to competency based systems of instruction, to behaviourist models of pedagogy, and to versions of systems theory. Its scientific, objectivist assumptions were largely responsible for the apolitical, atheoretical Tylerian curriculum and the Sydney Microskills model of teaching.

Student teachers need to know that **reading**, in this configuration, equates with the mastery of the 'great books' or decontextualised exercises in vocabulary skills, word identification and study skills. In either case, as researchers like Anyon (1981) have demonstrated, instrumental ideology functions to reproduce forms of social and cultural discrimination in working-class schools. While middle-class kids are reading canonic literature, thereby increasing their cultural capital, working-class kids are filling in language arts dittoes or copying teacher-notes from the blackboard.

Writing, on the other hand, is treated as an empty formalism, a set of disembodied rules, exhortations, and prohibitions about what one can or cannot do as a writer. Instrumental views of language and ideology lead inevitably to teaching practices which disconfirm the historical and cultural experiences of students whose class, race, gender or generalised background fail to match those of the dominant class.

2. Interactionist/Expressive Approach

If knowledge and language in instrumental terms are objective, outside the knower, in interactive or expressive accounts the focus is on the meaning-maker power of the individual, and on the status of language as a neutral window onto the world.

This transparency view of language, according to Giroux, derives from two sources - a cognitive/developmental tradition, and a romantic tradition. The heritage of Dewey, Piaget and Kohlberg has been to democratise pedagogy, to privilege imaginative consciousness, and to document the developing individual's ability to decode, analyse and solve life's problems. In the romantic variation, the individual psyche is valorised, and language is presented as a personal instrument.

Reading and writing practices are viewed through a double lens of authenticity and spontaneity. The emphasis is more than likely to be on the phenomenology of reading, on the lived through experience of the text, or on writing activities such as journals, autobiographies, or free writing. The general tendency is to reduce the visibility of grammatical, generic or linguistic structures in favour of more 'expressive' discourse which presumably is more 'authentic' or 'sincere' than the public statement. By way of illustration, during its hegemony, psycholinguistics failed to problematise such categories as 'communicative competence', 'bi-dialectalism', 'contextual varieties' or 'register'.

In the end, interactionist/expressive practices simply did not examine how different literacy approaches produced success, failure or resistance with different cultural and social groups.

3. Dialogical/Sociological Approach

A third, dialogical or sociological view sees language as social practice, as both a function of its user and constitutive of its users. Language is steeped in a history and culture that pre-exists the user, but is still a human product upon which human beings make their impact.

For Bakhtin (1981), what founds language is its reception, not merely its utterance. Meaning can neither be 'owned' nor 'rented' but must be actively fought over. Meaning, in the end, depends on the differential positions (of race, gender or class) of those who speak or write, because every spoken or written reply is meant to stand as 'a counter discourse to that of the utterer'.

In this view, culture, knowledge and power are politicised, and classroom knowledge in particular is seen as the result of a dialectic between the learner and a range of discourses in which he/she is inscribed. A more active, collective and contradictory subject is placed on the agenda, one that is seen to exist at the conjunction of a range of competing discourses and semiotics.

To illustrate how language can be used to legitimate different readings of the world, let us glance at how a term like 'empowerment' might be defined in each of these views of language. When used by instrumental or interactionist educators the term refers to the cultural capital, cognitive skills, or introspective ability needed to survive in a humanist, capitalist world. Within a dialogic discourse empowerment refers to the process of enabling students to transform the social order, not merely to adapt to it. Embedded in a critical pedagogy empowerment becomes enfranchisement, since it involves a process of establishing links among individual actions, cultural forms, social practices, material interests and their relation to the power of the state.

From such understanding students can attempt to connect language with text, genre and discourse to understand how language defines us as subjects, and inevitably positions us within discourses. The type of language study and language awareness most needed by our students is that which allows an understanding of how individuals are produced through the clash of conflicting discourses, and how they might proceed to develop a 'counter discourse' or 'resistant subject position' through which they can further their own projects of social transformation.

At the centre of the concerns I am proposing is the concept of text, made up of five basic elements: code, writer-in-text, reader-in-text, text-as-ideology and text-as-structured language. All five of these elements are mutually constitutive, and interact both as textual elements and as constructs possessed by the student. According to Eco (1979), to understand any text we need to know the syntactic and lexical rules that went into its construction. Hence, writers and readers are immediately implicated in texts as indexes of particular competences, one of which produced the text which the other, within tolerable limits, was able to reproduce.

The notions of text-as-ideology and text-as-structured-language are entirely interdependent. The structurally closed texts, whether of the textbook variety or the teacher's interrogative discourse, attempt to smooth over discontinuities, and in the process deny the nature of texts as intratextual sites for struggle, rupture, inconsistency, and instability.

There are, as Giroux has indicated, three stances that students can take when confronted with the ideology of text or the hegemonic structures of the school. First, **accommodation** involves students in learning to accept the requirements of particular discourse conventions, without necessarily questioning how those conventions privilege some forms of knowledge at the expense of others. The second stance involves **opposition**, with specifically disruptive behaviour often leading to a refusal to learn the patterns and conventions of a particular discourse community. The third, and most productive possibility is **resistance**, where the student explicitly challenges the text's value systems in an attempt to 'unmask' the hidden catechisation performed at more profound levels.

Writers and readers call texts into existence in the context of similar texts locked away in a storehouse of cultural memory to which they have been implicitly admitted. Here, particularly, the science, geography or history teacher possesses all sorts of discursive advantages over the student. There may indeed be no single generic pattern for *Little Red Riding Hood* because a fairy tale is always culturally defined and situated. On the other hand, there is an intertextual uniformity about the text on climatology which allows it to slip virtually unchallenged across cultural boundaries. All of this is not to deny, however, that learning genres as both reader and writer is a fundamental way of understanding versions of the world.

The argument I am using tends inevitably to consideration of the historically distanced contexts of reception and production, and addresses the question of how particular subjectivities constitute a particular discourse community and are constituted by a particular discourse. The reader, the writer and the text are produced in and through social and discursive formations, so that the individual psyche is seen to be part of the symbolic order of the culture within which it is formed and operated.

To understand how writers and readers are implicated in pre-existent genres and discourses is to understand the historical, social and political processes which produce and sustain ideology and power relationships.

One brief example will have to suffice of how a text's attempt to position its readers, to accept its ideology, its view of the world, can be deliberately subverted or resisted.

A group of teachers in training was given the following Interchapter from Hemingway's (1951) *In Our Time*:

> While the bombardment was knocking the trench to pieces at Fossalta, he lay very flat and seated and prayed, "Oh Jesus Christ get me out of here. Dear Jesus, please get me out. Christ, please, please, please, Christ. If you'll only keep me from getting killed I'll do anything you say. I believe in you and I'll tell everybody in the world that you are the only thing that matters. Please, please, dear Jesus." The shelling moved further up the line. We went to work on the trench and in the morning the sun came up and the day was hot and muggy and cheerful and quiet. The next night back at Mestre he did not tell the girl he went upstairs with at the Villa Rossa about Jesus. And he never told anybody.

One of the students, Susan, refused to accept the sort of natural, commonsense reading position which places the reader in alliance and sympathy with Hemingway's soldier. She resists the text's apparent or preferred meaning, and in the process refutes the ideology that produced the text in the first place:

> Can relate to the protagonist's furious forced promises to God which are never realised. I am guilty of this - have done it myself.
>
> War - distaste - sick of the issue - distant from me in time and space - little boys playing with big, deadly toys - tired of male authors and their obsession with war.
>
> Woman in the text is seen as recreation activity - sleazy, dirty; playing her part in the betrayal. She is the ultimate sin - the temptress who embodies the broken promise to God. She embodies the poverty, the rawness, the ugliness of the sort of towns always constructed in this type of novel.
>
> Novel definitely directed towards a male reader - the text alienates me - the text tells me the female is sexuality, nothing else - the female is there only when men need to escape from the serious business of shaping the world (and destroying other men).
>
> I resent the text - I put the book down.

The obvious next step is for Susan to actually write the girl's story from the Hemingway passage. In the process she may understand how this untold story challenges those stories foregrounded in the original text:

> She shut her eyes, but that only made her feel worse. Somehow she felt a little safer with her eyes open. She stared past his heaving bulk to those faded flowers trapped within the monotonous design of the wallpaper.
>
> He heaved himself up and looked down at her with a determined half snarl. She evaded his steel blue eyes, turned her head, rested her eyes on the chipped crucifix that hung precariously on the far wall. He mumbled and groaned. She cursed God for allowing men to extract pleasure from her pain.

> She watched the flies that alighted to drink the sweat forming on his arms, his chest, his back. His ugly European skin, red and blotchy identified him as an alien, an imposter and an invader.
>
> Why was he taking so long? She considered adjusting her position to enhance his enjoyment, then as quickly decided against it. Why should she feign a response? She lay still clinging to her pride; only her anger, her resistance, kept her alive.
>
> At last he had no more hate to put into her. He pushed her away. He made a dry ugly comment and began to dress.
>
> She curled up and stared at the peeling wallpaper, waiting for him to leave. But then he began to talk. His hot, heavy voice filled the tiny room. She hated it when they told their war stories. He spoke of death, of violence, of a man's world. Her mouth filled with a foul taste as she struggled against the nausea rising from the pit of her stomach. He paused, waiting for feminine sympathy. She stared at the flowers. He called her a heartless slut and advanced toward her. She shut her eyes and prayed: "Oh Jesus Christ get me out of here. Dear Jesus, forgive my sins. Help me Christ. Please, please, please!"

The application of the foregoing argument to the language practices of teacher education should lead to the following understandings on the part of student teachers:

1. that any text is inevitably a social construct, produced out of and containing a number of competing discourses.

2. that all texts contain gaps and contradictions which, when isolated, reveal that certain interests are sustained and legitimised, while others are silenced or marginalised.

3. that the teacher's obligation is to provide all students with opportunities to interrogate the discourse and language ideologies in a range of texts and reading materials.

4. that there are ways and means to provide students with the ability to contest and resist dominant discourses.

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WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES? WHERE HAVE WE BEEN AND WHERE ARE WE GOING TO?

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A personal history

The brief I was given for this short session was that I needed to talk about some of the things we have tried in teacher education courses, and my suggestions for future courses. The comments I make this morning reflect in no small way my personal history of higher education that has involved:

- 26 years as a student in a range of educational institutions (including two years at a teachers' college, and more years than I care to remember at two universities);
- 10 years' experience as a primary teacher and three years' experience as a curriculum consultant in New South Wales;
- teaching English, literacy, reading, writing, language and learning, language and literature;
- roles that have included junior lecturer, course coordinator, Department Head, and now Dean of Education;
- four major primary Bachelor of Education reviews, reviews of Graduate Diploma courses in literacy, and other minor reviews.

While this is very much an individual history, all of you have no doubt many similar educational histories to mine. The fact that I have worked primarily in New South Wales should not be held against me, nor should it render my comments irrelevant. I believe the issues faced in our two States are remarkably similar.

I should also state at the outset that I do not agree with assumptions held by some employers, teachers, community members, politicians and educators that:

- the quality of teacher education is poor;

- provisions in language teaching are poor;
- Literacy standards have declined.

I should come clean though and outline my personal biases concerning the major needs for change in higher education generally, and in language teaching in particular:

1. Higher education institutions should work far more in partnership - devising curricula, conducting joint research endeavours, making higher education even more relevant, seconded teachers, etc. This must be more than a form of 'token' involvement. Both sectors need to see each other as partners in education.
2. Courses need to involve more student activity in natural settings with real language users. I do not particularly care whether they are children or not, as long as they are language users in real contexts.
3. We must radically change the methods of delivery of our subjects to reflect the philosophy and practices of the subject content we provide. There is no use talking to students about functional literacy within a context that offers very few real or relevant functions.
4. We need teachers who can think, have well-developed pedagogical knowledge, who can reflect upon their practice, and who are aware of their own assumptions about language, learning and teaching.

Some stages we've 'grown out of' in primary courses

1. Separatism gone mad

This stage was evident during the sixties and involved subjects like the following: English method primary, English method infants, English method secondary, Reading, Literature.

Age boundaries were drawn, language fragmented, classroom ideas emphasised. Lecturers passed on the prevailing orthodoxies of the time.

What was lacking included: any discussion of process; an examination of assumptions about language, learning and teaching; writing and so on.

2. Old wine in new wineskins

This stage followed the emergence of three-year diploma courses, and the multiple births of CAEs in the 1970s. It was characterised by:

(a) Changes in labels: Reading, Writing, Children's literature, Language development, Drama, etc.

(b) An increase in time devoted to reading and writing. More concern with process. Alternative methods. A decreased emphasis upon skills and teacher intervention.

3. A move towards integration

This stage was simply an extension of the above. It promised so much: the integration of language into all subjects; every teacher a language teacher; language for real purposes; a greater awareness of process and so on.

Our knowledge of process led us to look far more for parallels between them. In turn, we tended to stress the need to bring the different language modes together.

What did we get? In some cases the merging of content with no integration, e.g. Reading/Language, Literacy 1, 2 and 3. There was widespread lip service to process as well as quite a deal of confusion of process and method. Some educators argued that content was being neglected. ‘What about me grammar?’ ’Shouldn't we be teaching spelling?’

Where are we now?

In depressed moments I think somewhere between 3. and 2. (above). In brighter moments, I tend to more optimistically feel we're moving on. Why? Because people are asking different questions. For example:

* How can I make my teaching more consistent with the content of the program?

* How can I challenge students to become more aware of the socio-cultural nature of language?

* How do teachers concerned for process act in the classroom? What is it that they do?

* How explicit should teachers be when discussing language?

* How can I develop reflective practitioners? Indeed, how can I be more reflective?

* What are the genres of power, and how should we teach them?

New directions in teacher education

I believe we are at an interesting stage in our history, because there are many special factors at work:

1. We know more about language than at any time in man's history.
2. We know more about learning and teaching than ever before.
3. We have made significant discoveries about the socio-cultural dimensions of language.
4. The demands placed upon schools are different. No longer are we training the masses to be literate. Our task is to show the masses that language is relevant for their world and can be used to their own advantage.
5. The world has more knowledge than ever before. We cannot expect to teach children all there is to know, or even one small part of what there is to know.
6. Schools are facing unprecedented political and social pressures.
7. Technology has changed the way man can use, access and communicate information; not to mention, how he can learn.

Coping with this different world - wanted: a new type of teacher

I believe that our training institutions need to consider:

* New content
    * New methods of instruction
        * New methods of assessment.

New content to cover?

1. There is a need for a renewed emphasis upon process. This will require:

    * increased attention to students' own reading and writing processes;

    * direct observation of children learning to read and write;

    * observation of people using language for real purposes in real contexts.

2. There is also a need to place greater emphasis upon the role that language plays in learning. Starting first with their own learning, students need to examine the part played by talking, listening, reading and writing for personal discovery. They need to consider:

    * How language can help them to make knowledge their own;

    * How teachers can help to develop students who can think critically, who know how to find information, can manipulate their own knowledge, and can communicate their ideas to others.

3. Language as a cultural activity needs to become a topic of increased interest in training institutions. Too much emphasis has been placed upon language as a psychological process. Students need to examine other questions:

    * How do reading and writing reflect culture?

    * How is language defined differently in specific cultures?

    * Why are cultural differences in the way literacy is defined and encouraged important?

4. The social nature of language learning needs also to be closely examined. Language is learned as we relate to other people. Reading and writing have social ends and their functions are socially defined. Furthermore, the meanings we construct as we read and write are socially constituted. These issues have profound importance for the way language is learned. Such topics need to be addressed in training courses.

5. Another major need is for the learning environment to be considered as more than just manipulation of content and procedures. Providing books is not sufficient to ensure that children will read. Nor will the provision of paper and pens ensure that children want to write. Children can be coerced to anything, but such activities are not life changing. It is only when children engage with something that has personal relevance that major growth and change occurs in them as learners. Research has shown that we provide different literacy environments for children depending upon ability, race, etc. For example, low ability readers:

- read only a third the volume of reading material when compared with more able readers (Allington, 1977; Clay, 1972);
- read orally for approximately 70 per cent of the time compared with better readers who read orally for only 30 per cent of the time (Allington, 1983);
- are frequently given material at frustration level compared with high ability children who get it at the instructional level (Gambrell, Wilson & Gantt, 1981);
- are given material of poorer quality (Cairney, 1987).

These issues need to be addressed in language courses.

6. Increased attention to the vital role that teacher talk has in learning is also necessary. Not only are the number and nature of interactions important, the content and intent of the instructional support we give has a vital effect upon learners.

For example, research has shown how talk is vital to early language development. What can we learn from this? An area of great concern is the fact that there is considerable evidence that not only do environments vary for students of different race and ability, the type of interaction with teachers varies. For example, low ability readers are:

- interrupted two to five times more regardless of the type of mistake made, and are corrected at the point of the error; whereas better readers are more typically interrupted at the end of a sentence or phrase (Allington, 1980; Hoffman et al., 1984);

- given less time to correct themselves, the teacher frequently pronouncing the word immediately to allow the reader to move on (Plaum et al., 1980);

- given teacher help more in the graphophonic area, whereas high ability readers receive more syntactic and semantic help (Allington, 1980; Alpert, 1974);

- are given more teacher centred lessons with teachers using more language of control (Eder, 1981).

Once again, issues of this type must be discussed within teacher education programs.

Summary of content

In summary, teacher education courses need to produce teachers who:

- know how language in all its forms is acquired, and how it develops;

- understand the nature of the reading and writing processes;

- understand that language is a means of communication, a vehicle for learning and a shaper of culture;

- know what their role is as a teacher of language in all its forms;

- understand that language has psychological, cultural and social dimensions;

- appreciate that the classroom environment is a complex social community;

- are aware of their own assumptions about language, learning and teaching;

- are prepared to reflect upon their own practice.

These teachers should:

- be readers and writers themselves;

- have a curiosity for learning;
- know how they can structure environments that create meaningful contexts within which children can use and explore language;
- know many of the methods which have been shown to help children develop competence in language, and have examined research evidence to support these methods;
- be capable of using the resources and technology available to him/her;
- have skill at observing children and be capable of monitoring, reflecting upon and interpreting their behaviour;
- be able to talk with and to students in order to help them to learn, i.e. be capable of providing scaffolding.

New methods of teaching are needed?

One of the greatest problems with teacher education at present is that the major method of delivery is an information transfer model. Lecturers transmit and students receive. We have been knowingly and unknowingly producing generations of 'sponges'. And we wonder why the first year out teacher suddenly discards the 'ivory tower' wisdom of the university and begins to soak up the pragmatic wisdom of their new colleagues.

We lecture to students about developing environments where students take control of their learning, where they pursue personal interests, where they should provide frequent opportunities for personal response, self discovery, etc. And yet, we do this by maintaining control over their learning, by setting all the agendas, by limiting the opportunities for personal discovery.

What do we need to do to change this? How do we make our teaching programs more consistent with the models we hope our students will implement in their classrooms?

First, let's be honest about the constraints which make university learning different to school learning:

(a) university learning comes to students at a much higher price, and offers a potentially more tangible reward (a career);

(b) universities are required to adopt a system of grading;

(c) universities are accountable to teaching authorities.

In spite of the constraints, what type of education must we provide? I believe it needs to be one dominated by the following:

1. Inquiry-based learning - There needs to be a focus upon discovery and the solution of self-generated problems. Why do some children struggle with reading? What makes comprehension harder? For what purposes do these children read? What value does group sharing have for comprehension development? Why did three students respond differently to the one picture book?

2. There is a need for close observation of real readers and writers engaging in meaningful language encounters. This may involve (for example):

   - Reading with young children.
   - Conducting miscue analyses.
   - Recording the group responses of five children who have just read *The Iron Man*.
   - Observing a group of preschool children dramatising a favourite picture book.
   - Watching a parent reading to his/her child.
   - Observing children drafting a narrative.
   - Shadowing several children collecting data about dinosaurs from the library ...

3. Teacher education students need to participate in a wide range of language activities with children, demonstrating and jointly constructing texts with them. This might include:

   - Conducting reading and writing conferences.
   - Engaging in dialogue journals with children.
   - Becoming a penfriend of a child (or group of children).
   - Reading and writing with children.
   - Telling stories to community groups.
   - Becoming involved in dramatic performance with children.

4. Self involvement - There is also a need for student teachers to engage in frequent reading and writing themselves. They need also to be given the opportunity to talk about their reading and writing. This may involve

encouraging them to reflect upon their own reading. Can they remember a special book read as a child? What type of books do they like? Why? What is the hardest part of writing for them? What words do they find hardest to spell?

New models for assessment

With new content and methods comes the need for new methods of assessment. Essays and tests are not sufficient. Assessment items need to be:

1. Activity centred - We might observe student teachers engaged with readers and writers. How well do they interact with children? How well do they use talk to provide scaffolding support? Are they capable of providing new knowledge, criticism, etc., without taking control away from the learner? We might examine their reading logs, observe them as they engage in writing themselves, watch them as they engage in group conferences, etc.

2. Assumption challenging - We need to look for evidence that they are prepared to examine their own assumptions. Are they aware of personal assumptions? Can they articulate reasons for holding them? Can they challenge other people's assumptions?

3. Process reflection - Are our students capable of making sense of their own observations? Can they observe children's behaviour? Do they know what to look for? Can they explain what they see to others?

4. Functional - Our assessment tasks need to have purposes other than simply testing specific knowledge. Assessment should be based upon real learning tasks, and conducted in real contexts where possible. We should require written reports, assignments, etc. for real purposes and audiences, e.g. prepare a report to the child's parents, write a program for your next prac., prepare an observation checklist to use with a group of 4 year old children.

Conclusion

My comments in this paper have been largely exploratory. In some senses the ideas I have presented are not new. Every suggestion raised has been used before. However, many of these ideas have been used in a token way, and often within learning contexts which are in direct conflict with the innovative idea being used.

There is a need to rethink the content, presentation and assessment of our courses. There is a need for higher quality graduates who understand much more about language and how it is learned. To achieve this I doubt whether the answer is to provide additional time and content. Rather, there is a need to provide a different type of course, one that challenges, poses problems and requires students to reflect upon their practice. Above all, our courses must involve students in work with language learners, they should teach them how to observe these learners; and finally, they should help students to develop personal pedagogies that will enable them to make informed decisions in the classroom. In this way, the complex challenges of the 1990s might just be met.

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APPENDIX II

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- Recommendations (pp. xxii-xxiii)
- Detailed proposals for preservice teacher education programs in mathematics (pp. 22-31)

(These extracts were included as an example of recommendations and proposals concerning teacher education programs.)

The following papers were provided at the conference:

Mikulecky, L.J. (1989) Real World Literacy Demands: How They've Changed and What Teachers Can Do, in: Lapp, D., Flood, J. and Farnan, N. (1989) *Content area reading and learning: instructional strategies.* Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

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APPENDIX III

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